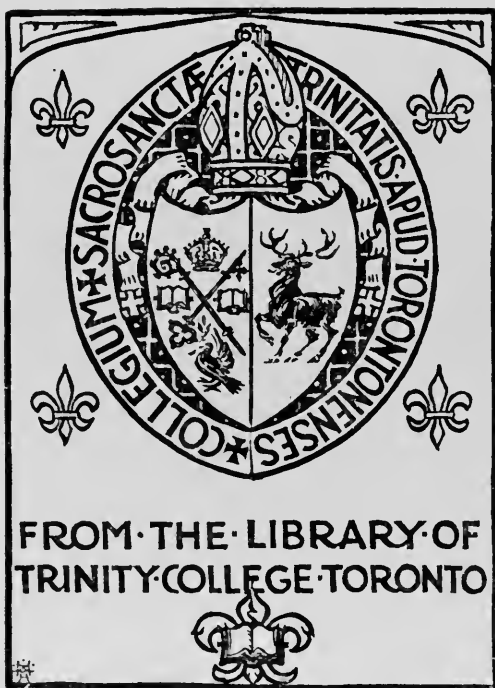


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THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE

BY

J. G. SIMPSON

CANON AND PRECENTOR OF ST. PAUL'S

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

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JUN 11 1974

To
EDWARD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER
WHOSE LOYALTY TO THE OLD PATHS IS STRONGER
THAN SOME SUPPOSE
WHOSE SYMPATHY WITH THE MODERN MIND IS WIDER
THAN OTHERS SUSPECT
WHOSE JUDGMENT ALL WHO KNOW HIM
HAVE LEARNED TO TRUST

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THIS volume, consisting mainly of sermons delivered in Manchester Cathedral and St. Paul's, is intended to be a sequel to "Christus Crucifixus," which was published two years ago. As its title, "The Spirit and the Bride," is intended to suggest, the subjects which are here treated range over that resurrection life of spiritual experience and believing witness which, alike for the Christian community and for the individual disciple, is the direct result of the work wrought once for all by the Lord in His own proper Person.

I may even say that my first series of sermons, "Christian Ideals," was in some sense a preparation for both the volumes which have now succeeded it; for though the unity of subject was, perhaps, not so immediately apparent, and though the book contains many anticipations of what was to follow, still its general purpose was to present those ideals of life and work and character which attract men

to Jesus Christ, even when they have not learnt to discover in Him that Saviour of the world whom the gospel sets forth.

I.

In the apprehension of Jesus as Lord there are three stages, corresponding roughly to the knowledge of Christ gained by the apostles during His earthly ministry, to their realisation of the significance of the Passion, and to their experience of the Pentecostal life. These stages are, of course, logical rather than temporal. Many, no doubt, begin with a recognition of the power of the Spirit, whether in the life of prayer or the sacramental fellowship of the Christian community. Others, again, as in the Methodist revival of the eighteenth century, are, like Bunyan's Christian, assured of the forgiveness of sins at the foot of the Cross. But it is, perhaps, characteristic of the present age, with its remarkable appreciation of social problems and its yearnings for an ethical ideal and an inspiration of human brotherhood, to "come and see" in the spirit of the enthusiastic Peter or the guileless Nathanael whether this be indeed the Messiah.

No one can take part in such gatherings as those which are now annually organised at Swanwick by the Student Christian Movement,

and learn anything of the mind either of its responsible leaders or of the hundreds of young men and women who avail themselves of its opportunities, without becoming aware that there is an eager approach to the side of Christ, which is manifesting itself in what is alike most courageous and most intelligent in the life of the coming generation, along with a wistful uncertainty as to the place which the unique force of the Christian religion is to hold in governing the personalities of those who acknowledge its peculiar power. To put this in the language of modern theological inquiry, there is much vagueness in realising the true connecting link between the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience. On the one hand men are listening with a keen, nay, a fascinated, attention to the skilful psychological analysis with which Jesus is presented as a heroic, prophetic, and withal intensely human personality ; and, if I mistake not, they are increasingly prepared to acknowledge in Him the supreme manifestation of what has been splendidly called the humanity of God, and to accept the language which is placed in the mouth of the Son of Man by the Fourth Gospel—"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The real point is, How may we pass from this sort of discipleship, of which it is possible at the same time to recognise the power and confess the inadequacy, to

that incorporation into the very spirit and life of Christ which is the characteristic experience of the Christian, so that He may become not merely an illustration in history, but a Divine presence in whom we live and move and have our being? We claim that the true and only link is provided for us in the interpretation which the New Testament sets upon the Passion, as an activity of God Himself, undertaken on behalf of the whole race of mankind, whereby He reconciles it to Himself, thereby recovering for every member of it his true status as the Father's son, redeeming him from the dominion of the Evil One, and restoring him to the rule and influence of the Spirit of Holiness.

For consider. It would not seem to be consistent with what we know either of the Divine or the human that a personality should act for no other purpose than to make known its own character. Men, for example, do not act in their social relations merely or primarily to reveal themselves or to manifest their love. This they inevitably do, and their actions are accordingly accepted as pledges of what they themselves are. But we are bound to ask the further question, What did they accomplish, what was the end which they had in view? Was this man a teacher? Has he written books on science or history or philosophy? Was that a social reformer? Are there laws or institutions or

methods which are the direct result of his influence?

And, if this is true of man, how much more profoundly true is it of God. Looking at the universe from the point of view of the apprehending mind, we may say that the heavens declare the glory of God and the pure in heart believe in Him. But, while we judge of the worker by the work, none will presume to say that the mighty frame of Nature was constructed or is maintained in being merely as an apparatus by which God may be discerned. No. God means to do something, and the revelation of His own mind, so far as it concerns you and me, is only a by-product of His vast activity.

That is precisely parallel to the picture of Jesus Christ which is set before us in the New Testament. We ask, as we are bound to ask, What did He do? It is entirely false to the proportions alike of the Synoptic Gospels and of St. John to regard the Crucifixion as other than the climax of the whole story, the goal of all the efforts of the Son of Man.

Equally unquestionable is it that the interpretation of His mission which is given alike by the primitive teaching and the incipient theology of the Epistles fastens upon the Cross as the central fact to the exclusion, as it might seem, of the ministry by which it was pre-

ceded. It is not at all true that St. Paul is occupied with a Christ whom he knows "not after the flesh," in any sense which would exclude what he knows must be, when baldly stated, a scandal to human complacency and an absurdity to human culture. "We preach Christ crucified." The character of Jesus Christ remains a standing perplexity for all time unless we can accept the salvation of the whole race of men by what the Bible calls "the sacrifice of Himself" as His achievement. The disappointment which we feel in contemplating the career of such a man as the late Lord Acton is the contrast between what, on competent testimony, we believe to have been his unrivalled capacity as a historian and the paucity of his published work. That may illustrate what we should feel if it were impossible to point to any definite work accomplished by Christ. And if it be asserted that, having regard to the millions that have owed allegiance to Him, we might apply on a far more magnificent scale the famous epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren, "*Si monumentum requiris circumspecte*," we can only say that such a fact deepens instead of explains the problem. For the question at once arises, Why are all these people Christians? What account can they give of the remarkable fact that they are bound by this allegiance and own this common sover-

eignty? Only one answer has ever been given that is at all adequate to represent the achievement of Him in whose personality we claim to be able to recognise the humanity of God. It is that the Son of Man is the Saviour of men; that the society of His disciples owes to Him not a point of view, a programme, an ideal, but life itself. Thus, and only thus, is the activity of Christ put in line with all activity, human and Divine, of which we have any experience, and that on a scale proportionate to our recognition of the wonder of His personality. It cannot be expressed more majestically than in the lines which Browning puts in the mouth of his Pope, supposed to be speaking amid all the widening thoughts of the Renaissance:—

“This one earth, out of all the multitude
Of peopled worlds, as stars are now supposed,—
Was chosen, and no sun-star of the swarm,
For stage and scene of Thy transcendent act
Beside which even the creation fades
Into a puny exercise of power.”

In spite of all the reserves with which the Christ husbands the resources of His personality for the silent and solitary work of which the Cross is the outward sign, He nevertheless manifests forth His glory. But we can only pass from the awe and wonder of this spectacle to the joy and power of that life of which

He is alike the fountain and the fulfilment, if we are prepared, like Israel at the Red Sea, to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." The reasonableness of the Cross only appears as we admit it into the circle of our thoughts and view the landscape of human experience from the rising ground of Calvary.

The centrality of the Cross, as the triumphant achievement of the life of Christ, might be freely illustrated from every book of the New Testament. I select the Fourth Gospel, because there seems to be a tendency to miss the real scope and purpose of this great writing. People talk as though the object of this "story of a disciple's faith" were merely to select such episodes in the evangelical story as in his judgment made it unmistakably clear that Jesus was the only-begotten God, and that in consequence a series of seven works of power were chosen as illustrations of this one theme. It is even argued that a gospel the very purpose of which was to emphasise, in opposition to gnostic heresy, the reality of the Incarnation, and in which the thirst, the tears, the affections, the wistfulness, the mortality of Jesus, are all conspicuous, allows the humanity almost to disappear in contemplation of the Godhead. So far is this from being the case that, as at least it seems to me, there is no ground for supposing that the Fourth Gospel ever separates the idea of the

manifestation of God in Christ from the redeeming work of the Son of man. This becomes still more evident when the Gospel is read in the light of the First Epistle.

But two things ought to make clear the scope of the writer. And first the Prologue. This includes, be it remembered, the whole of the first eighteen verses. It is not sufficient to say that the thesis of the gospel is the statement that "the Word became flesh . . . we beheld His glory." Yes, but it is "the glory of the only-begotten of the Father . . . full of grace" no less than "of truth." And "grace" is related, as in St. Paul, to the redeeming work. "He came unto His own home, and His own people received Him not." Here is His rejection; His martyrdom, if you will; His Cross—in a word, the Passion. This is all included in the Incarnation. Then comes the same series of events regarded as a Divine activity, wrought out on behalf of believers. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God." Here we have the recovered status of "them that believe on His name," which is exactly what St. Paul means by the grace wherein we stand through faith in Jesus. And this recovered sonship involves a new birth, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," a condition which is intimately related in the first Epistle to the propitiation for sins. It is only when all this has been

stated that we reach the declaration "the Word became flesh."

The other consideration is that thread of personal experience which is not always noticed, but which nevertheless binds together and gives unity to the successive episodes which the writer chooses to illustrate his theme. The words of the Baptist's proclamation of Jesus as Messiah, which purport to have been uttered in the hearing of "two of His disciples," may, equally with the statement of the Prologue, be regarded as the text of the Gospel. "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The note of this utterance is struck again and again throughout the book. If it is not present in the story of the Marriage at Cana, it is prominent in that of the Cleansing of the Temple. It meets us in the Conversation with Nicodemus when we read of the Brazen Serpent, with its commentary, "*Sic Deus dilexit mundum.*" The thought is present in Christ's hard saying about His flesh and blood and in the similitude of the corn of wheat. Caiaphas is described as having "prophesied that Jesus should die." It may be assumed that the idea of sacrificial consecration breathes through the narrative of the Upper Room and the Last Discourses. And the two most striking features in this evangelist's account of the death of Jesus are the emphasis with which he records his conviction of its reality and the unexpected analogy which he draws between the unbroken legs of the

dead Christ and the wholeness of the paschal lamb. We seem to hear an echo of the Baptist's announcement, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

The main interest of St. John's Gospel, as indeed of the whole of the New Testament, is the Cross. It represents the activity of a redeeming God not as breaking through the veil of a human passion, but as sacramentally presented in it. The outward passivity of Christ under the assault of external forces is not obscured. Jesus bears His cross, is stretched upon it, receives the vinegar, yields up His spirit. The soldier pierces His side. The body is laid in the tomb. But behind the outward submission the conflict is fierce and final. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." "I have overcome the world." This is the connection in which the evangelist recalls the familiar passage in the later portion of Isaiah, in which the prophet speaks of the arm of the Lord as revealed in the sufferings of the Man of Sorrows when He is led as a lamb to the slaughter and bears the iniquities of His people.

II.

The transition from the Finished Work of Christ to the Spiritual Life of His people, the consummation of the one and the source of the other, is the Resurrection. Consequently the sermons with

which this volume opens deal with this fundamental Christian belief. This at once brings into view certain important issues which naturally arise out of the modern conception of the universe and the method of historical investigation which the modern critic inevitably applies to the books of the New Testament. The Church of England has been recently challenged to consider how far the Faith of which it is the guardian is inseparably connected with what, for want of a better word, we must still call the miraculous. As what I am about to say may seem in the opinion of some to incline too strongly to a conservative position, I want to record my earnest conviction that, in spite of the perplexities which naturally arise whenever it becomes necessary to adjust old and cherished truths to new and unfamiliar habits of thought, the challenge is to be received with patience and hope. Hasty action and indiscriminate condemnation is on every ground much to be deprecated. If, on the one hand, the speculations of young thinkers, eager to find themselves in touch with the forces of the future, are likely, though without intentional disloyalty, to make concessions that hazard essential truth, there is an equal risk that the timidity of older believers may commit the official Church to positions that will prove to be untenable. We do not want to make heretics. The crystallisation of inadequate suggestions into party watchwords by ill-considered and

premature anathema is as much an evidence of failure in matters of religion as the proclamation of a strike in the industrial world or the passage of Bills by the creation of peers in legislation. My own conviction is that we shall live to be thankful that honest and inquiring thinkers have been allowed to put forward suggestions which trouble and perplex, not necessarily because these suggestions represent what must ultimately win universal acceptance, but because they are the oscillations without which movement is impossible.

May I now direct attention to two or three sentences in the sermon on "The Message of Easter," which were constructed with some care to express exactly what they say? They are as follows:

"Though it need concern none of us to prescribe the grounds which for others may be a sufficient basis for faith, nevertheless we may say that any reading of the New Testament which does not allow us to declare . . . that . . . on the third day the tomb was empty, is not only a departure from historical Christianity, but tends inevitably to the evaporation of evangelical religion."

In thus speaking, I deliberately wanted to leave room for those people, and they are not a few, who feel that, though on the whole they can commit their lives to Jesus Christ, and thus find

themselves in general sympathy with the main body of believing Christians, would yet hesitate to give a definite assent to every article of the Apostles' Creed as commonly received. I am not thinking of those who desire to become accredited teachers of the Church of England. If it is the privilege of an individual to be free, it is the duty of a community to be something, and a Church is bound to take pledges of its ministers which it does not exact of its members. But while we tell the ordinary baptized Christian to remember that the faith and experience of the community is something larger than his own, we are probably taking the surest course to prevent him from growing into that faith and experience, if we tell him that he must abstain from the communion of the faithful until he can give a clear and unqualified assent to every article of the Creed. To do so would be to ignore the method of faith. This never involved acceptance of a collection of successive propositions. It may be compared rather to the adjustment of focus, by which a picture, which from the first has been present in the field of vision, attains clear distinction with each turn of the lens. It is probable that many are kept from committing themselves to organised Christianity because they imagine that its official representatives assume a tacit acceptance of propositions to which they are not prepared to give an unqualified assent.

The question of the Empty Tomb brings us at once face to face with the subject-matter of the speculations to which I have referred. The philosophic problem of miracles is too large to be discussed here. But there are one or two things which may fitly be said. The first is that the very conception of miracle is alien to the intellectual atmosphere of the modern mind, and any discussion that starts by defining miracle will probably be to a great extent irrelevant from the beginning. We can scarcely think of God intervening in creation in such a sense as to break off or interrupt its due order and sequence. But this is only another way of saying that the larger view of nature, which has become possible in the present age, rejects those mechanical conceptions to which the idea of miracle is relative, as altogether too rude and narrow to be an adequate representation of facts. We have instruments of greater precision with which to observe the universe. It is an enlarged view of the normal that rejects the abnormal.

This mental attitude is undoubtedly affecting our Christology, and giving us an organic view of the Person of the Incarnate Son in place of a rough mechanical presentation. A few years ago I stated this in "Fact and Faith" as follows :—

"It is the indivisible Person of Christ which is the object of experience, not the two natures,

which have only a representative value as expressing what we believe that the facts of His manifestation show Him to be. In effect, however, much of the traditional language of theology so actualises the natures as inevitably to convey the impression that Christ is in reality two personalities, on the analogy of Stevenson's well-known romance of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

This means that we must not divide the activity of Jesus into two sets of actions, one of which is normal and proves His humanity, the other of which is abnormal and betrays His Godhead. We believe that Christ manifests the humanity of God, and we have consequently neither the right nor the desire to sever His tears, His agonies, His prayers from His Deity. But we must be true to the principle all round. We must not say that the actions which have been placed in the other category are alien to human nature. In Christ the deity of man is correlative to the humanity of God. If He gives us a truer conception of God, He also gives us a larger conception of man. The exceptional is not the abnormal. It would now be generally admitted that Christ's power to heal was entirely consistent with His humanity. Have we any right to draw the line at this point?

As it would seem, there is a real danger lest, having for ordinary purposes emancipated our-

selves from mechanical habits of thought, we should revert to them when theology is concerned. Much of the current talk about miracles is at least thirty years behind the time. We must not construct barriers between the physical and the spiritual, between the human and the Divine, which exist only in our own imagination. We stake off an area in the tracts of universal being, and calling it Human Nature, insist that our Lord God shall reveal Himself within the limits of that field. But what if He cannot? Never let us forget that the limitation of the physical involves a corresponding limitation of the spiritual. Love requires opportunities and must needs make where it does not find them. We are bidden not to seek signs from heaven but to look hard at the humanity. Yes, but what humanity? Am I to study a house-painter to find Titian, a Thames boatman to discover Nelson? It is permissible to ask those who think we can retain or even strengthen our hold upon the doctrine of the Incarnation by eliminating what some call miracle, to remind them what that doctrine is. "The very God, think Abib, dost thou think?"

But it will generally be allowed that, whether the Resurrection be rightly described as miraculous or not, it is the fact and not the miracle with which Christianity is primarily concerned. If it is by the Resurrection that Jesus is "marked off as the Son of God," this is not, as the whole context

of the Epistle to the Romans makes plain, because it is a crucial act of Divine omnipotence, but because it consummates that work of redemption by which the gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Now it is just here that there appear to be singular grounds for hope in the attitude of those who, approaching the question from the side of historical criticism, with a prejudice against what they would describe as miracle but with a strong belief in the essential truth of Christianity, give what will seem to many, as to myself, an inadequate account of the resurrection of our Lord.

If we know anything of the progress of criticism in Germany and England, we shall realise the fact that the process has been towards and not away from belief. If, for example, the position of Harnack is not in all points satisfactory to the traditional believer, it is infinitely more so than that of Baur. Tübingen stands for something very different from Berlin. The Rationalist who read Strauss's *Life of Jesus* was a different person from the liberal theologian who translates for the Crown Library. The old controversy, with which Lightfoot, for example, had to deal, concerned the date and authorship of the books of the New Testament. It must be obvious that, so long as the main body of Catholic tradition was regarded as without a secure basis beyond the middle of the second century, all that concerned

the Resurrection might well appear as nothing more than a mythological apotheosis of our Lord and, so far as it related to faith, be relegated to the region of pure subjectivity. But criticism has long outstripped the theories of Tübingen. It has now been proved that, in the words of Dr. Rendel Harris, "the Catholic traditions have a singular habit of justifying themselves." With whatever reservations the statement must be made, it yet remains true that, so far as questions of date and authorship affect the credibility of the New Testament, we stand very much where we did before criticism began its work. For all practical purposes the Gospels represent primitive traditions, which may be accepted as prior to the Fall of Jerusalem and as unaffected by any but Palestinian influences.

The area in which difference of opinion may exist with regard to the tradition of the Resurrection is in consequence much reduced. Not only is deliberate invention entirely out of court, but the field in which unconscious fiction may find exercise is circumscribed. The value to be attached to particular narratives by the historical judgment will be influenced much more by general considerations of probability than is the case with the broader question of the date and authorship of a document. The problem in the eyes of the historical critic comes to be this: what is the precise nature of the event which lies behind the

reports as they are presented to us in the Gospels? It would no longer be held that the Christian teaching with respect to the living presence of Christ in the Church would sufficiently account for the tradition. The Resurrection is not a legend constructed by uncritical minds as a concrete representation of a spiritual belief. It is recognised that the conviction must have preceded and given rise to the teaching, and that this conviction must rest upon some experience in the realm of fact. What, then, are the facts which would sufficiently account for the reports which we possess? Is it enough to suppose that our Lord after His crucifixion manifested His presence to the disciples with such an assurance of reality as to produce the unalterable conviction of His exaltation with power, or is it necessary to connect with these appearances some further experience immediately related to the tomb itself such as finds expression in the declaration "He is not here; He is risen"?

Now it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that those who appear as assailants of the orthodox belief do not come before us, like Hymenæus and Philetus, as exponents of some philosophic or metaphorical or figurative doctrine of resurrection. They would assent to the language of Harnack when he says that "it is useless to cite Plato; it is useless to point to the Persian religion, and the ideas and the literature of later

Judaism." With him they would declare that the faith of Christendom was "bound up with the conviction that Jesus Christ has passed through death, that God has awakened Him and raised Him to life and glory." It is acknowledged that the life of the Christian Church rests ultimately, not upon abstract theories but upon a concrete experience of Jesus Christ. Apostles could say "We have seen the Lord" with an assurance of reality as absolute and as convincing as that with which they could relate their experiences of the Galilean ministry.

But if I am asked whether I think that such an account of the Resurrection as I have attempted to describe fully meets the requirements of the case, I am bound to say that I do not. I do not feel that so apparently simple an account of the "event" as is covered by appearances of the glorified Christ corresponds with all the facts of the apostolic faith, which demands something more complex. If we want to reach the fact which underlies the reports of the appearances, we want also to arrive at the fact which is covered by the reports of the empty tomb. Let it be fully granted that this fact was of such a nature that any description of it could not be expressed otherwise than in language which was more or less inadequate. Let it be further admitted that the conditions under which the discovery was made were so unusual, unexpected, and exciting as to

add to the notorious inaccuracy of ordinary testimony elements of fear, amazement, and confusion, that might well produce narratives on the details of which it would be difficult to place implicit confidence. Let us further concede that reminiscences of the Old Testament and other disturbing circumstances would easily embroider the tradition. But it is one thing to allow for the development of a story; it is quite another to deny it all substantial reality. If we may believe that a critical treatment of the alleged appearances does not prevent us from acknowledging that our Lord did appear, we may believe that a similar treatment of the traditions of the empty tomb does not preclude the conviction that they too rest upon an actual event. My contention is that a careful examination of the actual content of the primitive Christian belief will not allow us to rest in the one side of the apostolic testimony without accepting the other.

Harnack asks the question whether St. Paul knew of the message about the empty grave. He answers it by saying that, while there are theologians of note who doubt it, he himself thinks that the apostle probably did. I should answer the same question by saying that there is little room for doubt at all. For just consider the famous argument in First Corinthians arising out of his readers' objection to the resurrection of the flesh. How did that objection arise? Clearly out

of the fact that the Corinthian Christians had been taught to connect the prospect of their own personal resurrection with the fact of the resurrection of Christ. The form of the discussion makes it sufficiently evident that they at least must have received the apostolic faith as involving the empty tomb. For their teachers had seemed to them to mean that the bodies of the saints would rise up and vacate the tombs. How could this be, they ask, in view of common experience? The bodies of men are often scattered to the winds, burned in the fire, mauled by wild beasts. Imagination was staggered by the idea that seemed to be presented to it. "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" Does not experience seem to contradict the notion that the dead will be raised?

Now, if St. Paul had believed in nothing more than a spiritual resurrection of Jesus, what sort of answer would he have made? Would he not have begun by applying to the case of our Lord that very argument with which he meets the Corinthian difficulty? Your difficulty is altogether wide of the mark, he would have said, for the Christian gospel never contemplates the material resurrection of Jesus. His sepulchre is with us to this day. The body that was taken down from the cross still lies wrapped in its cerements within the cave of Joseph. What we believe is that God gave to His own Son the same spiritual body which shall one

day be bestowed upon His disciples. But this is just what the apostle does not say. He begins by reminding them that, whatever difficulties it may seem to involve with regard to their own resurrection, the gospel, to which they stand committed, declares that Christ, who died for our sins, was raised on the third day from the dead. Whatever the origin of the formula which he quotes, the apostle accepts it as a statement of his own belief. Apart from the mark of time, which is itself noticeable, it seems to me scarcely conceivable that such a phrase as "risen" or "raised from the dead" should have been invariably used by St. Paul to denote the passage of Christ from death to life, if he had supposed that appearances were the only method by which the assurance reached him. Would such a term as resurrection be appropriate to express such an assurance of the presence of the departed as might reach us through the channels of Psychical Research? Would it be naturally adopted if it were necessary to-day to formulate our acceptance of an Easter Faith that ignored the empty tomb? But it is the language uniformly adopted by St. Paul and stereotyped by the invariable usage of the primitive community.

But this is not all. What St. Paul goes on to say, after he has dealt with the case of those who fall asleep, would seem to be decisive in determining what was his view of the resurrection of Jesus. For the dead in Christ are not the only

case to which he applies the conception of the spiritual body. There are still those "who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." What is to happen to these? They are not to die. "We shall not all sleep." A process of change is to pass over their personality, something apparently corresponding to the swallowing up of mortality in life, of which he speaks in the second Epistle, when the believer is not "unclothed" but "clothed upon." "This mortal must put on immortality." We are not now concerned with the justice or probability of this speculation,* only with its bearing upon the risen Christ. The point is that, so far from regarding the spiritual body as altogether apart from present physical experience, he actually contemplates a process by which a change shall pass over the human body as it now is without the intervention of death. It is this third case, which could bear no analogy to the case of the departed except through the relation of both to the resurrection of Jesus. The spiritual body is indeed the general principle, but it is exemplified in three different cases: (1) the resurrection of Christ from the dead, (2) the resurrection of the dead in Christ, (3) the transformation of the living. It is because the first exhibits the change of the body of humiliation into the body of glory that we get the suggestion of the third, just as it

* As a matter of fact, St. Paul does not regard it as a speculation, but as the disclosure of a mystery.

is because the Lord's risen body is spiritual that we get the suggestion of the second. But if the first be in all respects like the second, there is no passage to the third.

And nothing brings out more clearly than this reference to those who are contemplated as alive upon the earth at the Second Coming of Christ what is the essential difference between the Christian teaching concerning Eternal Life and all the other doctrines and theories, whether of the immortality of the human soul or of its survival after death. Neither St. Paul nor Christianity ever divides the personality of man. Though spiritual, it is still a body of which he speaks, and bears a close and intimate relation to the material frame. One thing is clear, that when St. Paul spoke of a spiritual body he did not mean the same thing as spirit. He may not have been able to define the limits of either. No more are we, when we distinguish in the speech of daily life between body and soul, but the distinction is none the less real. St. Paul's view of redemption corresponds with that which from the first took shape in the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. His teaching on the subject of purity is based on the redemption of the body. "Ye are bought with a price ; glorify God, therefore, in your body."

We must be careful to bear in mind that whatever is characteristic of the Christian faith reaches it along the lines of its Palestinian origin, never

through the amalgamation of other ideas with its own fundamental conceptions. St. Paul stands in this matter precisely on the same ground as the primitive community. The gospel, which moulds his own teaching and which he is careful to hand on unimpaired, is something which he has himself received. It arises directly out of the facts of which the apostles regarded themselves as the witnesses. What we have therefore to ask is, What must have been the nature of the fact which produced in the minds of the disciples the conviction, not merely that the life of Jesus was not ended with the grave, nor yet that it had passed into a higher stage of existence, but that the whole of His personality, body no less than spirit, was ransomed from the power of death? That their faith rested on experience as distinct from argument, whether Platonic or other, is generally admitted. They had seen the Lord. But what must have been the nature of the experience which produced that faith in the peculiar form which it assumed? That St. Paul believed that his "vision" of Jesus of Nazareth on the Damascus road was the same in character as the appearances that had been vouchsafed to Cephas or James does not admit of doubt. But it is one thing to say that St. Peter beheld no more than St. Paul and quite another to say that St. Paul beheld no less than St. Peter. Nor is it enough to discuss the matter from the point of view of assurance only. To the

apostles the redemption of the body through the resurrection of Jesus was primarily a matter of fact, and they were ready to acknowledge the blessedness of those who had not seen and yet had believed.* The point is that a cause is demanded which shall be adequate to the effect. If a real experience underlies the narratives of the empty tomb, as it is here assumed that such an experience underlies the accounts of the appearances, we have, as it seems to me, such a cause. But I find it increasingly difficult to suppose that an appearance of the glorified Master, while yet the body remained in the tomb precisely as it had been there deposited on Good Friday, would really satisfy the conditions of the Easter Faith. Something is required which shall redeem these splendid words of Harnack from all semblance of rhetoric:—

“This grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal. It is useless to cite Plato; it is useless to point to the Persian religion, and the ideas and the literature of later Judaism.

* It is really astonishing that Harnack should seem to have committed himself to so singular an interpretation of the incident of St. Thomas as is suggested by the following sentence: “The story of Thomas is told for the exclusive purpose of impressing upon us that we must hold the Easter Faith even without the Easter message.” Not “without the Easter message,” surely, but without the verification of that message by the senses, which is something entirely different.

All that would have perished and has perished ; but the certainty of the resurrection and of a life eternal which is bound up with the grave in Joseph's garden has not perished, and on the conviction that *Jesus lives* we still base the hopes of citizenship in an Eternal City."

In view of all that I have attempted to say, I think it will now be apparent that I should seriously deprecate any attempt, such as has been suggested, to obtain from a commission of competent theologians anything like formal recognition of a teaching which seems to reject the empty tomb as compatible with the position of the Church of England. Those who advance these speculations, especially if they be young and serious students, we are bound to meet, not merely with a chivalrous sympathy, which might savour of indulgent patronage, but with a real conviction that they are helping towards that readjustment of the ancient faith to modern habits of thought which is the special task of the present time. But no course of action could well be more rash than one by which we might be committed, before we knew where we were, to the abandonment of elements which are vital to the future of Christianity.

Equally important is it that we should not be hurried into any official pronouncements prescribing the limits within which faith must move.

I myself believe that the Empty Tomb is inseparable from the Catholic Faith, and as such is bound up with the teaching of the Church of England. But are we quite sure that any formula could be devised which should secure all that is essential to this belief, while at the same time it would exclude all that at the present moment, not to speak of ten years hence, would be held to be indifferent, if not crude and doubtful? Take, for example, the case of the angels at the sepulchre. Far be it from me to assert that no angels were seen there. But this is the point. Could we honestly say that no one who supposed that the consternation of the moment had caused the presence of two or even one young man dressed in white to be interpreted as an angelic visitation ought to be accepted as a true believer? Or there is the case of the stone. Would it be incompatible with a genuine belief in the Resurrection to suppose that its removal had been caused by human agency? Or, to go deeper, would any one seriously assert that we cannot believe in the Resurrection unless, in terms of popular imagination, we represent the Lord as arising on Easter morning from His recumbent position, folding up the grave-clothes, and walking out into the garden through the open door? The whole atmosphere of the post-Resurrection narratives, the Pauline conception of the spiritual body, the very terms of that in which we declare our

belief, suggest something entirely different from any picture which it is possible for imagination to form. The Christian Scientists, I understand, hold that the ultimate destiny of the human body is to become so identified with the motions of the spirit, that pain and death will be entirely transcended. I have no intention of endorsing that view. But who knows whether human nature, when it was made the organ of the Divine Son, did not, though still subject to death, become capable of exaltation in consequence of some such principle as that? Thought is always discovering more refined forms for the expression of a truth that remains essentially the same. It is the coarse thumb that we fear.

Prediction is notoriously a risky trade. But perhaps a forecast based upon experience may not be entirely wide of the mark. We are to-day thankful for all that criticism has done for the New Testament, giving us back the books which we cherish with their general authenticity unimpaired though established on a basis freer, surer, more scientific than any of which our fathers dreamed. May it not be that patience and forbearance, coupled with a keen historic sense and a calm trust in God, will similarly establish, on a basis which the next generation will recognise as both ancient and modern, the central conviction of our Christian Creed, that "on the third day He rose again from the dead"?

III.

Not only the title of this collection of sermons but many of the sermons themselves lay peculiar emphasis upon the doctrine of the Spirit. There is no department of Christian teaching in relation to which it is more necessary that we should recover the attitude and mind of the Apostolic Church. We had almost ceased until recent years to regard the Spirit as an experience at all, acknowledging Him rather as a personality revealed by Jesus Christ, who existed within the Godhead, and was in some sort of way responsible for the bestowal of those graces of the Christian character which, taken together, constitute holiness. Far from recognising the Spirit as the most immediate and intimate revelation of God to the Christian soul, we have been content to accept Him as a somewhat inaccessible reality, the belief in whose operation and influence we took over along with our faith in the person and work of Christ. Thus we reverse the attitude of the Apostolic Church. "The promise of the Father" was to them unintelligible until they experienced His power. The reproduction of the works of Christ in the life of the Christian community was the primary cause of the acknowledgment that the same Spirit animated the members of His body as dwelt within Himself. The existence of the Spirit was not merely an inference from their confession of the Divine Son.

Nor had they any narrow view of the epithet "holy" as applied to the Spirit. He was even more the source of Prophecy and of Power than the author of moral goodness. That sharp separation of ethics from life, human and Divine, considered in the totality of its energy, which is expressed, for example, in Matthew Arnold's aphorism, "conduct is three-fourths of life," was foreign to the mind of the early Church. Miraculous power, as an arbitrary gift of God conferred upon the saints in attestation of character, belongs to a different order of ideas. By one and the same Divine breath were the heavens made, the Son conceived, the Church inspired. One and the same power was present now to heal, now to show things to come, now to stimulate the members of the brotherhood to faith and good works. By one Spirit Christ is raised and the mortal bodies of men are quickened.

It is for this reason that I have not shrunk from calling attention to those gifts of healing which occupy a prominent place in the New Testament. It is manifest that Christ took a wider view of the bondage from which He had come to deliver men than is covered by the forgiveness of sins. The power of Satan over human life was something wider and more far-reaching. Consequently we never find our Lord drawing a sharp distinction between physical cures and spiritual absolutions, between death and sin,

as some might anticipate. The disciples whom Jesus sent into the villages preached repentance, cast out demons, and anointed the sick. No line separates these various activities. All arise out of the one authority. And it is clear from the New Testament that powers the same in kind were regarded as bestowed upon the Pentecostal Church.

Now I by no means desire to see an attempt to revive the use of gifts in the Church simply by the exercise of an official authority in a community where the conditions are, to say the least of it, not Pentecostal. A licence accorded to every priest to administer unction, and that indiscriminately, could have only one result—a return to the “corrupt following of the apostles” which the Church of England has repudiated. Nor is it possible to look without misgiving upon anything like an unintelligent recourse to what is called spiritual healing as an alternative to the employment of medical science. It is only a superstitious generation that would exaggerate the subordinate “gift of healing” out of all proportion to the larger work of the Spirit. What we do need to observe is the fullness and freedom which marked the experience of the new life in the Church of the Apostles and to pray for such a fresh realisation of the Spirit’s presence and power that it may be said of the fellowship of Christ’s people in these latter days :—

“In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

IV.

Some readers may experience a feeling of disappointment because the frame and order of the Christian society does not receive as full a treatment in this series of sermons as they might desire or at least expect. I am not unmindful of the importance of those problems which gather round the subject of the Church and the Ministry, more especially in their bearing upon the great question of the reunion of Christendom, but I have been anxious to deal with principles more fundamental than those which involve the discussion of Church history and ecclesiastical polity. But it may be worth while to call attention to the former of the two ordination sermons included in the present volume, more especially in reference to the following passage :—

“We foreclose [no historical inquiry about what is still an uncertain problem, the origins of the Christian Ministry. In God’s good time He will show us all how the ways, which now seem devious, at length shall meet. We dare not anticipate that revelation. And yet, if others claim the witness of the Spirit, we too have our experience. To us this succession, about which men wrangle, is no arrogant claim to trust in ourselves and to despise others. It is the pledge of our calling. By this we know that Thou didst send us.”

Historical science does not stand still. There can be little question that the time has come when some readjustment is demanded on the part of Anglican scholars between the theory of the Church and modern conceptions of the origin of the Ministry. This does not necessarily involve the abandonment of the former. We may claim, I think, that a clearer view of the Church as a visible society is apparent among critics who would at one time have insisted on the Invisible Church as the only theory consistent with the facts of the Christian religion. "The Church of our Lord's promise," says Dr. Lindsay, "was to be a *visible community*." In proportion as scholars of all schools arrive at agreement upon a fundamental principle such as this, the discussion of the elements which are essential to the preservation of its organic unity attains a new and practical importance. In view of the minute and diligent investigation which has been in progress during the past twenty years, it is clearly incumbent upon the Church of England to employ its younger scholars upon the work of restatement in relation to new historical inquiry. Nor need there be any fear of disloyalty to principle in the acceptance of this task. It is only part of the general duty of reinterpreting old principles in the presence of larger light which is in a special degree the discipline of this generation.

But on the other hand it must never be forgotten that "we too have our experience." Thousands of

devout Christians have found in the communion of the English Church, with its ordered ministry and its sacramental system, a satisfaction of religious needs which seemed to be denied them in other communions. Churchmanship represents a distinctive Christian experience, and it is impossible for those who are in any way trustees of that society, within which that experience has been gained, to treat as mere prejudice and bigotry the barriers which at present prevent that wider fellowship which all true Christians, whatever their specific allegiance, ardently desire to see established. No religious question is purely a matter of history. We are entitled to suspect all movements which in the sacred name of history ruthlessly cut the ground from beneath the feet of any body of simple-minded and serious believers. The facts which are alleged may possibly be true, so far as they go, but at the same time they will be something less than history.

Exclusiveness and Latitudinarianism are still with us as disturbing forces, but neither has any real promise of the future. It is, of course, easy to draw a ring fence round your own system and to ignore or oppose all that falls outside it. Equally easy is it to eliminate all that differentiates one body of Christians from another, and to agree to treat as essential truth nothing but the greatest common measure of them all. But a better and more scientific spirit has begun to reveal itself in

the religious life of the country, which recognises that no Christian community may be rightly asked to treat as indifferent what has formed the subject of its distinctive witness, and seeks to draw men together for prayer and counsel on the basis of such a recognition. No doubt "interdenominationalism," as this spirit has been somewhat clumsily called, can only make its way in spite of much misunderstanding. There is the risk of confusion and of involuntary compromise of principles on the part of those who desire to be loyal to it. But no one who has attended the summer camps of the Student Christian Movement, from which even Roman Catholics and Copts are not absent, and where men from Cuddesdon or Kelham carry on their daily offices and celebrations, and students from Headingley or Aberdeen practise the devotional exercises to which they are accustomed, yet all find common ground at the meetings held in the big tent, can doubt for a moment that something really new has been developed which is big with spiritual opportunity. There are, I dare say, some inconsistencies in the application of principles, but life is always full of these, and I do not see how the limits of a big idea can be ascertained except in practice. But the prevailing sentiment is unquestionably this, that while the needs of the future imperatively demand a closer co-operation of all who acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, the elimination of differences would mean a poorer, not a richer, a weaker, not a

stronger Christianity. The method of restoring the broken unity of the Church by calling upon earnest men to promote charity through surrender of some portion of their experience is fatal, not only because men will not do it, but because the larger Christendom which is yet to be stands in need of that experience.

The year which is now drawing to a close has afforded instances of the two policies of Exclusion and Latitude, which belong to a controversial era that I would fain believe we are outgrowing.

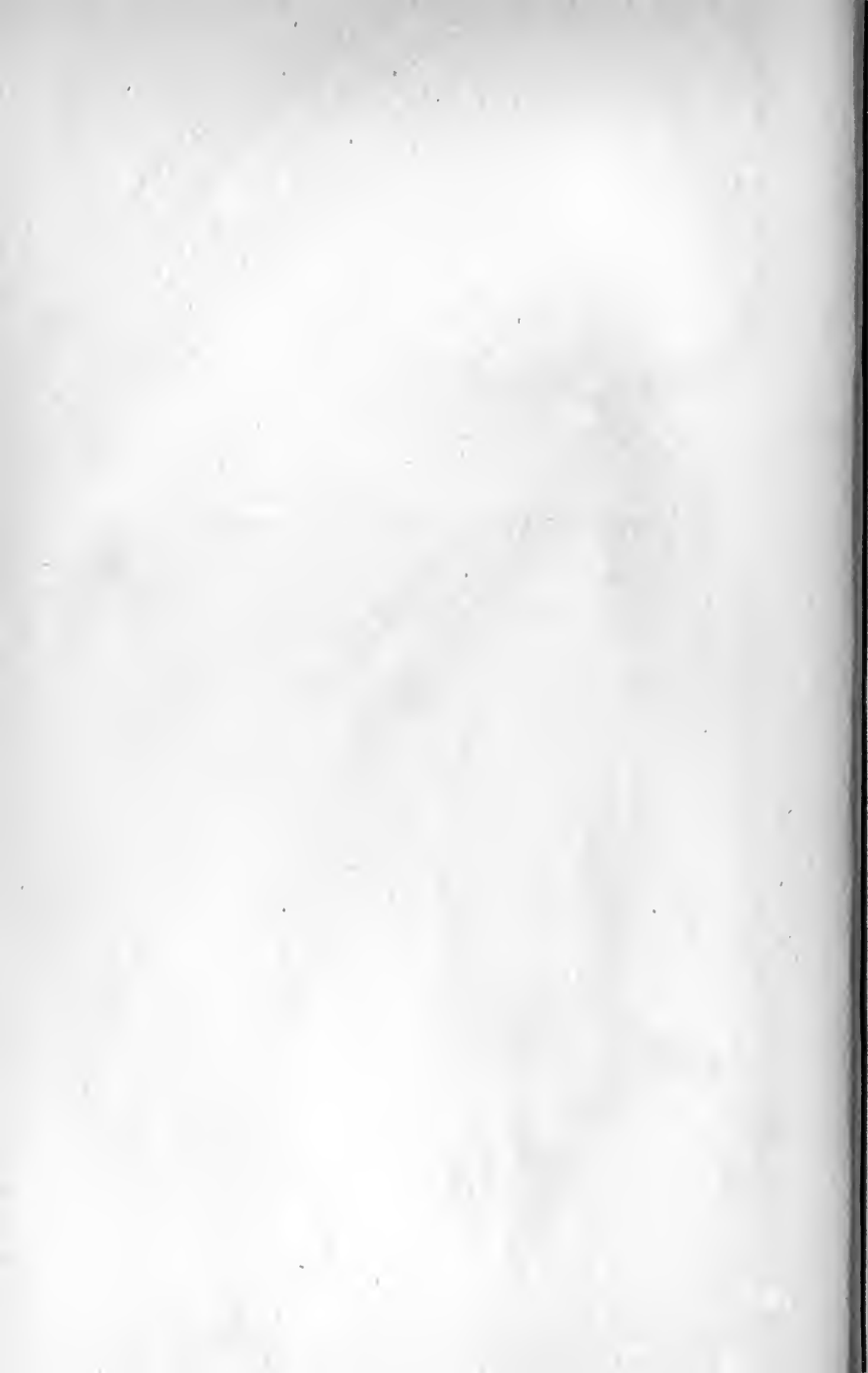
During the course of the preparations for the Manchester Mission of 1912 a letter was received by the Executive Committee from the local secretary of the Free Church Council, which raised the question of a concurrent mission. The spirit of the communication was precisely that which manifests itself in the Student Movement. Reference was made to the impression that would be created if a simultaneous effort were made by Churchmen and Nonconformists. No co-operation, no partition of territory, no joint machinery were proposed. The Church was not asked to abate any of its claims or compromise any of its principles. But the idea was thwarted by a small band of Exclusionists, to whom the very thought of parley with a Dissenter seemed to be anathema. This was denomination-alism in its most sectarian form.

The other illustration is provided by the invitation publicly given to Nonconformists to

communicate at Anglican altars on the occasion of the Coronation. This is to put the cart before the horse, and to assume unity as the means of reaching it. A course more likely to embarrass those who are patiently working towards reunion upon interdenominational lines could not well have been devised. The authorities at Swanwick were wiser. They arranged for celebrations in the parish church for members of the Church of England, a Communion Service in the Camp for Free Churchmen, and a concurrent meeting in another tent for the Society of Friends. I observed that a letter-writer in the *Times* took occasion to taunt those who protested against the idea of a corporate Coronation Communion with substituting a Communion of the Church of England for the Supper of the Lord. The letter was a smart piece of journalism and was probably successful in causing pain. But it showed a singular failure to appreciate the true meaning of the Eucharist as a sacrament of unity. It is not a mere token of the Lord's dying love, but the pledge of fellowship in Christ which there is nothing to mar or divide. While, therefore, a Christian cannot be content until all the followers of the Lamb, on earth as in heaven, shall be fellow-guests at one Table, it is a true instinct which leads him to recognise that a visible sacrament implies a unity of spirit that has at length been consummated in an external union. When there is an identity of spirit between two

societies, fellowship follows as a matter of course, and then, but not till then, a common Eucharist is appropriately celebrated as its seal, sacrament, and crown.

The sermons have been arranged so as to form what it is hoped will be seen to be a more or less ordered progression from the Exaltation of Christ to the glorious hope of His Appearing. In most cases the occasion has been indicated. But this does not imply that none of the sermons has been used at any other time. Five have been so used. Thus I was doubtful whether to describe Sermon VII. as preached at Canterbury or Manchester. It was delivered, with variations, at an ordination in both cities. There is no reason why such a sermon should not have been preached twice in places where, although the conditions and needs were identical, the audience was almost certain to have been entirely different. Another of the five found its way into two cathedrals, a pro-cathedral, and two large parish churches, beside paying a visit to the Clyde. But as neither of the cathedrals was St. Paul's, precedence had to be accorded to its appearance in the Abbey. Alas! publication puts an end to these apostolic journeys.



A.—THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

*In St. Paul's Cathedral on the Third Sunday after Easter, 1911, being
the preacher's first discourse as Canon-in-residence.*

“He is risen ; He is not here ; behold the place where they laid Him.”

ST. MARK xvi. 6.

I

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

IN the first eight verses of the last chapter of St. Mark we have what is in all probability the oldest form of the tradition of Christ's resurrection. At any rate, in this brief and broken account we get as near as may be to the original document which lies behind the first three Gospels. In every one of them the tidings of the messenger who encounters the women at the tomb is reported in language that is all but identical. It is a twofold announcement. First of all, though St. Mark rightly places it second, being as it is the narrower if more immediately intelligible portion of the message, there is the confirmation to the startled ear of the strange and bewildering fact already presented to the astonished eye—He is not here. And then we have the sovereign truth of the eternal order, which transforms the whole aspect of life for those who receive it, which gathers force with every century of the Church's witness, and with the experience of each Christian disciple, the pledge of that Real Presence of Christ

which is the secret of the Church's power to evangelise the nations—He is risen.

This afternoon I desire to speak of both sides of this testimony to the living Saviour and of their relations the one to the other. But in the first place it should be clearly understood that none can hope to enter into the spirit of the New Testament who treats the apostles and evangelists as though they told the story of our redemption from the point of view of Christian Apologetic. The great intellect of St. Paul was content to declare that it was through the foolishness of preaching, through the proclamation of a message unadorned with the persuasiveness of human device, that God willed to save them that believe. None knew better than he that all men had not faith. Nor is it now the object of an Easter sermon to demonstrate the resurrection of our Lord upon evidence that would compel the verdict of a British jury. Apologetics, like criticism, belongs to an age. The Evangel is for all time the food of the hungry, the shelter of the homeless, the friend of the sinner. The best defence of the gospel of the risen Christ is the power with which it enters lowly doors, the radiance with which it transfigures the lives of the poor.

I see the sailor, home from the cold seas of the frozen North, and lifted from the hold of a whaler, the shattered wreck of a strong man, to whom in a dingy tenement in far Dundee I give the sacra-

ment of Christ's Body and Blood. I see the market labourer, stricken with what proves to be his mortal sickness, calling me to his bedside, telling the story of his secret sin, sending notice of the banns of marriage to the parish church, and at length, when three weeks have expired and the progress of the malady makes legal wedlock no longer possible, united by the light of a solitary candle in a Leeds attic to the aged woman who for many a long year had passed as his wife. I see a young lad, his fair limbs smashed in a Pendlebury pit, holding my hand with evertightening clasp as, with set lips, he writhes in his convulsive pain. I stand in thought this afternoon, not in this glorious Cathedral, but in a ward of the hospital at Salford, and I see around me miners, weavers, dockers, carters—some burned, some crushed, some broken, but all of them, sinners though they be, rejoicing in their beds, as we send ringing from floor to ceiling the glad chorus—

“Hallelujah, tell the story
Of Him that was slain!
Hallelujah, sound His praises
Again and again!”

Ah! believe me, it is not the smart young man in a suburban villa, smoking his cigarette, and discussing now the latest novelty at the halls and now the newest development in popular theology, that brings us into the atmosphere of the New Testa-

ment. It is when we are permitted to behold the tenderness, the pathos, the simplicity, the sorrow of our noble but suffering humanity that the true proportions of the everlasting gospel stand revealed to our adoring gaze. It is not in our moods of criticism, but in our hours of need, that the proclamation of the crucified and risen Saviour steals into our spirits, benediction in its breath and healing on its wings.

"He is risen." What the great announcement, which is the pivot of the religion of Jesus, can have implied to those to whom the assurance was first given we can only dimly understand. The shock of a reversal of thought and feeling, so sudden as that which befell those early believers, is an experience which to ourselves is all but impossible. Yet those of us who have any spiritual experience at all must at least be aware how little the grand Easter hymn conveyed to our dull imagination when first we learned to sing it compared with the glorious significance of its Alleluias as we sing them now. Eternal truths can only be gradually apprehended in their length and breadth by the constant and deepening experience of those who have surrendered themselves to their influence. We must compare them, not with the axioms of mathematics, but with the secrets of personal character. In the mystery of friendship, to those who are freemen of the craft, new wonders, deeper manifestations, sublimer

altitudes are always revealing themselves in personalities, whose essential unity seems only to be enhanced by their infinite variety. So is it with the risen Christ.

In that first glad moment when you became aware, in what, it may be, was for you an ecstasy of joyful surprise, that there stood beside you with pierced hands and stricken side One whom hitherto you had not known, and who gave you the assurance of forgiven sin, you did not understand, you could not understand, all the glories that the saints have found in the life which is hid with Christ in God. Nor could the Christian community have anticipated as a concrete and living experience the continuous revelation of the abiding Presence of the living Master which is given in the historical life of the Church and in the lives of individual disciples. They had only known Him "after the flesh." Even of the disciple whom Jesus loved it is recorded: "Then went in that other disciple, and he saw and believed." The vacant tomb became the sacrament, if we may use the term, of what it enabled him to apprehend. The Resurrection is a fact that mediates between Eternity and Time. It links two worlds that are yet one. It is the stimulus under which men commit themselves to the influences, new every morning, of the invisible and regnant Lord. So the Spirit comes. His entry into the course of this world, as He floods and dominates the spirits of

His votaries, becomes the masterful and ever-present witness to the risen life of Jesus. It is by the Spirit that they are enabled to call Him Lord. There is, therefore, no cause for amazement that many devout Christians, especially if they be of that mystical habit of mind which fails to appreciate how shy and elusive are the things of the Spirit, should at length begin to doubt whether after all it is a condition necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of God that the seal should have been broken on that far-off Syrian grave.

What, then, are we to say to the suggestion not infrequently heard in the present day, which seeks definitely to distinguish between the Easter Faith and the Easter message? Shall we hold fast to the belief in the exalted Jesus, but regard as illusion what has for centuries been received as the historical witness of the empty tomb? Are we to maintain that Christ is risen, but yet repeat with a difference the ancient assertion, "He is not here"? Multitudes of simple and devout Christians have been convinced that Jesus lives because "Jesus Christ is risen to-day." Far be it from me to allow myself to use language which would discredit the loyalty or cast doubt on the faith of those pious persons who would seem to be ready to accept a new interpretation of their Christian position. Too well do I know how very hard it is to be a Christian! But though it need concern none of us to prescribe the grounds

which for others may be a sufficient basis for faith, nevertheless we may say that the reading of the New Testament that does not allow us to declare, in the words of Dr. Harnack, that "this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished," that, in fact, on the third day the tomb was empty, is not only a departure from historical Christianity, but tends inevitably to the evaporation of evangelical religion. "He is not here." A negative can never be the substance of a positive belief, but for all that it may be its indispensable warrant. The successive experiences of the great Forty Days, the overwhelming transformation of Pentecost, the witnessing of a worshipping and missionary Church—each and all of these were necessary before a Peter could sing the praise of Him who had begotten the body of believers to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, or a John declare that we have an Advocate with the Father who daily proves Himself with power to be the propitiation for our sins. But the bitter experience of the Passion had been far too concrete, far too vivid, far too real, to be transformed into the assurance of victory save by an experience as real, as vivid, and as concrete.

We are in danger always of becoming the slaves of a philosophy that draws a sharp distinction, which, so far as our experience goes, has no final validity between the body and the soul, between object and subject, between the physical and

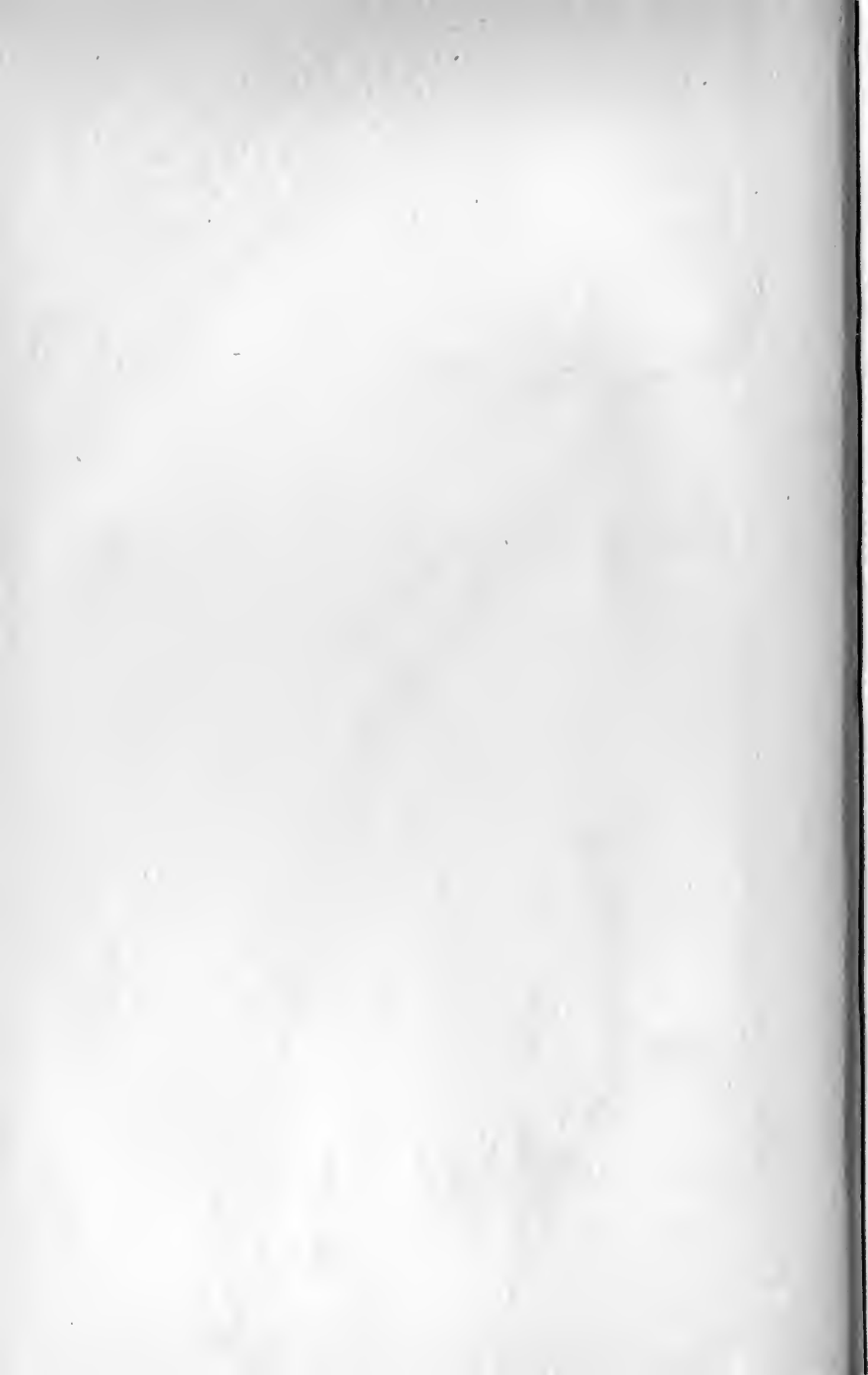
the spiritual. The most amazing inward change we allow without question; a corresponding variation in the order of outward fact we are ready to dismiss as a miracle. No doubt many purposes of practical importance are served when we think of faith and hope and love as belonging to a different category, as moving in another plane, from arms and feet and eyes. But we enter the region of pure assumption when we imagine that what we call the body is but a husk, an integument, almost a transitory accident, of that inner world of thought, of emotion, of will to which we give the name of spirit. Surely those words of Scripture which are inscribed on the vaulting of yonder choir, and which interpret the manifold creation of God as it is there pictured in its successive stages, are infinitely truer to the reality of our actual experience. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." What is the principle that is here expressed? Is it not this? Not a single experience of my manifold and marvellous nature but may be viewed alike in a moral and in a material aspect. The lowest function of my body, the most elementary operation of my physical life, is no mere process of material change. It may be so treated, it is rightly so treated, when science classifies observed phenomena and registers external sequences.

Yet there is not one of them but has its spiritual significance. The holiest aspirations, the deepest repentances, the noblest resolutions, belong indeed to the innermost shrine of the soul's communion with its God. Yet who shall accuse the physician of profaning the sanctuary because he seeks, if it be but with reverence, to express these activities of the religious life in terms of the material brain? But look at life as the artist, as the poet, as the prophet looks at it. Look at it, not through the spectacles of the abstract thinker, be he man of science or moral philosopher, but with the eyes of the common people. Then, if I mistake not, you will perceive how inseparably the outward and the inward are woven together, and how intimate is the relation between historic fact and eternal truth.

Such, at any rate, is the outlook of the New Testament. The grandeur of its naïve simplicity is not "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Its theology, no less than its narrative, moves in the real atmosphere of daily life. This is, perhaps, the reason why its spirit lent itself so readily to the expression which it received when it was done into English as the Authorised Version in the creative, and eminently real, age of Bacon and Drake and Shakespeare. When St. Paul declares that "the wages of sin is death" he does not stay to distinguish between the physical change which terminates our mortal

career and that bankruptcy of the soul the horror of which is only dimly discernible by human perception. We may indeed ask whether the outer darkness, which is the second death, could ever even have faintly appealed to the imagination of mankind apart from the fear of a physical dissolution through which, even in times like our own, when society steeped itself in the forgetfulness of these brief hours of sunlight, they have been throughout a lifetime subject to bondage. So when "life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel," the birth-place of the hope which looks through death is an outward and historical fact, the vacant and deserted sepulchre. I hate the confidence of a complacent dogmatism. But I express my profound and earnest conviction. When the straightforward simplicity of those who sailed the Spanish Main, who were the creators of our English literature, and who gave us the Scriptures in our mother-tongue, reasserts its supremacy over those obscurer habits of thought which, in their higher manifestations, delight in problem-plays or philosophic novels, and in their lower seek unto wizards that peep and that mutter, it will appear with growing clearness that the message of Easter is like the humanity to which it appeals, like the great God Himself from whom it is sent, one, whole, and indivisible, and that the link which binds the prevailing Passion of

the Son of Man with His eternal and everlasting glory is rightly expressed in the language of the historic creed, "The third day He rose again from the dead."



CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY

*In St. Paul's Cathedral on the Fourth Sunday after Easter, 1911,
on the occasion of a parade of Territorials.*

“Ye were bought with a price : glorify God, therefore,
in your body.”

1 CORINTHIANS vi. 20.

II

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY

IN the eyes of the general public the parson is still, I fear, regarded as the representative of a land which is very far off from the daily interests of the ordinary man. I have seen him described by a trade almanack, in which an advertising grocer entertained his prospective customers with pictorial illustrations of the different professions, as "the man who prays for us," just as, gentlemen, a member of your cloth was represented as "the man who fights for us." To the seaman he is still the "sky pilot," who guides the spiritual traveller on his invisible voyage toward no earthly pole. He is treated by large numbers of people almost as though he were made of different clay from common mortals.

Dividing the universe into two worlds, on one of which the sun shines, while the other, so at least he has heard it said in church, has no need of the sun, the ordinary man is quite certain

that he belongs to the former, while the latter—does not the inconvenient cassock proclaim it?—is the appropriate home of the priest. The priest—yes, and the women, at least the good ones. It is all very well for his sister, whensoever she is not ministering to his domestic needs, to go to early celebrations of Holy Communion, or to attend meetings in May. He is a man of sentiment. He would rather see her in the church than in the polling-booth. Any day, if he cared to observe the composition of a crowd, he might see as many women as men mounting Ludgate Hill and streaming through St. Paul's Churchyard on their way to that daily toil to which under the stress of modern conditions it is their lot, no less than his own, to go forth until the evening. But it suits his preconceived notion of her character—I wonder, by the by, how far he really knows it—that her knees should be bent before the altar and her eyes be homes of silent prayer. For himself an obtrusive piety is rather out of place. He will come, of course, when his commanding officer gives notice of a church parade. Is he not a loyal Englishman? But he moves somewhat uneasily in a place of worship. He does not know where to put his hat, and there is a constraint in the very postures of the sanctuary.

There are few men on earth for whom I feel a greater sympathy than the officer in uniform

who is endeavouring to assume the attitude appropriate to prayer. If he succeeds, it is an achievement. Or if he adopts that compromise which is far too common among gentlemen who have compassion on their clothing, he has an excuse not available for the civilian, who has long discarded the sword. The difficulties which he experiences are in truth typical of the uneasy movements of a host of excellent laymen when circumstances render it necessary to make some sort of demonstration in matters of faith.

Do I not interpret rightly the unexpressed feelings of multitudes when they are asked to heed the warnings, to accept the consolations, and to identify themselves with the hopes and expectations of religion, if I compare them with the sentiments of the mariners in Kipling's poem on "The Last Chantey"?

" Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Crying: ' Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lee !
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and we'll beat to open
sea! ' "

At the sound of those words I can almost believe that a quiver trembles through the bones of Nelson, lying silent in the Crypt! Once more Portsmouth Hard is alive with eager faces, and oars are uplifted by the crew of the captain's

gig, as a slender figure in blue coat and white breeches steps lightly down the stairs.

That is the real world. No man, whose hair is not yet silvered and whose body does not feel the burden of advancing years, can well think otherwise. The cry of the grouse on the moorland, the pool where the trout lie, the heavy roller passing back and forwards on the smooth green turf, the cooling waters of the summer bath, are drawing you with a fascination which you would be less than human if you were able altogether to resist. Nor have the greatest preachers of Christ's gospel ever failed to sympathise with the glow of your manhood. Listen to the words of one of the noblest orators whose voice was uplifted here at Paul's Cross, honest, English, glorious Hugh Latimer, as he recalls the men of his day from the unworthy pleasures of the town, its bad houses, its gaming-tables, its boon companionships, to the exercise of those manly sports which well befit these marvellous bodies with which God has richly furnished us :—

“In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn me any other thing ; and so I think other men did their children : he taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as other nations do, but with strength of the body : I had my bows bought me according to my age and

strength ; as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger, for men shall never shoot well except they be brought up in it ; it is a goodly art, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physic."

So far one who had learned to play the man long before he jested in the fire at Oxford. And the large humanity of the risen Christ Himself was the true warrant of His servant's preaching. The language of religious people, the symbolism of religious art, has too often fallen short of this high standard. Even that true poet, Mr. Keble, when he sings, "Two worlds are ours," seems to suggest that though parallel they are independent spheres. And when a bishop in my hearing spoke of a woman, who was alike practical and devout, as one who knew both worlds and never forgot either, he almost raised the suspicion of a not quite consistent Christian life by the language which he meant for praise. No, the truth is that the resurrection of Jesus, which we celebrate afresh this Eastertide, is the witness not to the existence of a shadowy, unsubstantial life separated from these delightful shores by the untravelled sea, but to the largeness of a life that knows no death, and is as real, every bit of it, as the sky above us and the earth beneath our feet.

What a great thing it would be if people could be brought to see, as the Christians of whom we read in the New Testament most certainly saw,

that it is a matter of supreme moment, not so much to what is sometimes understood by our eternal welfare, as to our whole view of what is meant by the life through which we are now passing, whether our conduct and conception of the world is really governed by our belief in Jesus' resurrection. It was no spirit from the vasty deep that first affrighted and then gladdened the eyes of those who had seen their Master die on the deserted cross of Calvary. Ghosts do not change the lives of men, inspiring the fearful with courage, the despairing with hope, the dying with life. "Behold My hands and My feet that it is I Myself." It was no impalpable apparition that stood in the midst of those who had been the disciples of the crucified Nazarene and said, "Peace be unto you." It was Jesus Himself, in all the fullness, in all the reality of His rich, warm personality.

The sun shone with fairer light, as the old carol has it, on the morning when Jesus Christ arose. Earth and sky seem more substantial, more real to the sons of the Resurrection. Many philosophers have taught that the soul is immortal. Christians believe in the resurrection of the flesh. We cannot picture to ourselves the garden of the Holy Sepulchre but as spread with a carpet of living green and decked with the fresh flowers of spring. The Christian falls in love afresh with the beauty of the world as he is awakened by the joyous pealing of the bells in the dawn of Easter Day.

If we meet a young man striding down the valley on his way to the early Communion, we find ourselves rejoicing in the strength of his limbs, in the glory of his manhood, in the dew of his youth as from the womb of the morning. And the lithe form of a maiden tripping across the fields brings a new sympathy with the poet's fancy, when he sings "Her feet have touched the meadows and left the daisies rosy."

This could never be unless we felt instinctively that to the Christian the world meant infinitely more than it could ever mean to such as have never found that inexhaustible capacity for pure enjoyment which comes from drinking of the Well of Life. We who have been redeemed at the cost of God's own tears and blood, not from the body, but from the curse which has rested upon it, take our true place in universal nature, and amid the chorus of the birds, the hum of the bees, the sounding waves, the rushing winds, the breath of a living and lifegiving earth, know how good it is to be alive as we offer the praise of redeemed lips, the thankful exercise of all our liberated powers, to Him who is the Father of our whole being.

St. Paul was a much greater Christian than those who came after him, and who emended the grand simplicity of his text until the shadow of that fatal distinction between body and soul, which in the history of the human race has again and again proved either the sanction of a maimed

experience or the excuse for sinful indulgence, seems almost to rest upon one of the most magnificent passages in the whole Bible. When you are tempted to wreck and ruin the fair fabric of your physical frame by riot, by excess, by lust and impurity, which under the guise of natural appetite will lead you down to the chambers of death, then remember that the resurrection of the Lord who died for you means its liberation from the dominion of the devil. "Glorify God, therefore, in your body." Do not let us mar the directness of this appeal by imitating the timidity of those later interpreters who read, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit." We do not want to have our life divided up into body and spirit, secular and sacred, weekday and Sunday. The devil likes to keep us talking about what we ought not to do on Sunday morning, because none knows better than he that our destinies are really determined by what we do on Saturday night. A few reserves which are labelled "sacred" are the best guarantee that Beelzebub can have for undisturbed possession of the character. "Give me the body" is the cry of every claimant for the citadel of Mansoul, "and let who will have the spirit."

Yes. There is but one problem in human life, and that is the problem of the body, the organ through which alone life manifests itself, the home of our activities, the seat of our desires. "Glorify God in your body" was the straight

appeal of one who knew what it was to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ had made him free. "I beseech you," he cries, "by the mercies of God"—by the very form, that is, which your redemption has taken, by the manifestation of the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, by the offering not of the Spirit but of the body of Christ once for all, by the condemnation, the killing, the extermination of sin in the flesh, by the return of the Body which was crucified from the grave by which it could not be holden, and by the quickening of our mortal bodies of which that resurrection is the pledge—"I beseech you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice," a holy offering, to the God who has redeemed them. That, and that alone, is "your spiritual service."

Ah! brothers, be prepared to live, and you will be prepared to die. The fuller, the braver, the richer your life here, the readier will you be for the wider life hereafter. It is not a different but a larger world that lies beyond our bourn. It is the same voice that called the heavy laden and the sinful by the Lake of Galilee, and that now is as the sound of many waters. It is the same face that turned and looked on Peter in the judgment hall and that now shines like the sun in the glory of the Father. Believe in that Spirit of power which is the gift of your risen Lord, and you will meet the conflict of the years, which strong men

welcome, with a love that is victorious over lust, with a hope that triumphs over death, with a faith that overcomes the world. When you can meet every man with the steady gaze of an honest friendship, and every woman with the pure eyes of a knightly chivalry, you will know how good life is; how good, how tender, and how free!

Then when the evening comes, and the sands of time are sinking, do not shut the doors, nor draw the blinds, nor lay me in an inner chamber, but carry me to the window, and open the casement. Show me the earth in which I was cradled, and which has been to me a joyful mother. Let me see the shining hills crossed by the shadow of the clouds. Let me hear the sounds of universal nature. Let me feel the sunlight on my brow, the breath of the breezes on my cheek. This is no sad farewell. I am not descending into darkness, nor shall I be brought into the dust of death. I am not looking forward to an existence stripped of all that has given colour and form and vividness to the days that are past. If I am departing, it is to be with Christ, and that is far better, not because the tent in which I have dwelt is being folded up, but because this corruptible shall put on incorruption, because mortality is swallowed up of life.

**THE ASCENSION THE PLEDGE OF DIVINE
PRESENCE**

In St. Paul's Cathedral on the Sunday after Ascension, 1911.

“So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.”

ST. MARK xvi. 19.

III

THE ASCENSION THE PLEDGE OF DIVINE PRESENCE

THOSE who have attended a Scottish funeral may remember that the ceremonial usual on such occasions differs somewhat from the order with which we are familiar in the South. Before the company disperses a few spadefuls of earth are thrown upon the coffin till it is completely hidden from sight, and then the undertaker steps forward and lifts his hat. Such a detail may appear trivial and unimportant. But after a service of faith and hope has raised the mind into the larger life, where death is swallowed up in victory, the intrusion of this social custom—I speak from a frequent experience—seems to close the book upon those pages of human intercourse of which the scene before us represents the end. Go back, gentlemen, with what grace you may to your daily routine. Your whilom friend lives but in the dim and dusty chambers of your memory. Henceforth at kirk and at market his place knows him no

more. The undertaker has lifted his hat. All is over.

The ascension of the living Christ is in its essential character entirely different from the burial of the dead. No shadow of mortality strikes across the splendour of its personal triumph. Yet as we try to represent to ourselves that scene upon the Mount of Olives which St. Luke records, imagination refuses to believe that no earthly regrets mingled with the heavenly joy of those who witnessed the Lord's departure, or that the sadness of farewell did not cast a shadow upon the assurance of ultimate victory. The veiling cloud drops like a curtain upon the drama of Christ's finished work. Elijah has gone up by a whirlwind into heaven, and for all the promise of a double portion of His victorious Spirit, we seem to hear as of old the inquiry of the prophets: "Know ye not that the Lord will take away your Master from your head to-day?" And tremulous is the voice that replies, "Yea, we know it; hold ye your peace."

But there is a point at which all analogies fail to represent the fact which they foreshadow. So it is here. We read the New Testament in the light of a Church History the course of which could not have been dimly foreseen in the dawn of Christian faith. The disciples, who were assured that this same Jesus should so come as they had seen Him go, could not have received such an

intimation as implying the prolonged absence of their Master in a far country. The future, like distance among the hills, is always foreshortened. It is a fact of history that the apostolic Christians regarded what we have learnt to call the Second Coming as a manifestation of the Christ always imminent and swiftly to be accomplished. This alone should make us pause before we decide what the experience of Olivet must have meant for those who shared it.

A closer examination of the sacred record will impress us with its reticence. The Fourth Gospel is silent concerning the ascension. The words addressed by the risen Christ to Mary Magdalen may be taken to imply it. But the famous sentence in which the Lord refers to the attractive power of His own uplifting from the earth is applied by the evangelist not to the ascension, but to the cross. "This He said, signifying by what death He should die." St. Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, explains the content of his Gospel, as though nothing had intervened to distinguish the appearance of the risen Saviour to the Eleven from his own vision on the Damascus road. How St. Mark's Gospel may have ended we can now only conjecture. But the words that express the exaltation of Jesus in the concluding sentences which have been substituted for the lost original suggest an article of belief rather than the report of an event—"He was received up into

heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." And Matthew is brought to a close, not with an account of the Lord's departure, but with the promise of His perpetual presence. When we come to the narrative of St. Luke, we are presented with a picture akin to that of the Transfiguration. Art has made us familiar with the idea of a gradually receding Figure, watched by the upturned faces of the disciples till it is lost in the distant blue. But it is a somewhat different impression that a closer study of the text seems to convey. The form of the beloved Master is seen overshadowing His faithful followers in the attitude of blessing till it is shrouded in the mists of the mountain, and the disciples find themselves gazing at a vacancy like that which surprised the disciples at Emmaus when He vanished out of their sight. Where the things of the Spirit are concerned we are all children, nor could the Church have found other language in which to express the exaltation of Christ than that which it uses in the historic Creeds—"He ascended into heaven." But what could be more irrelevant than the doubts and difficulties which arise in men's minds when they seek to reconcile the apostolic narrative with modern conceptions of astronomy or gravitation? It is plain from the whole series of reports concerning the appearances of Christ after His resurrection that the Saviour, though a living person and no phantom of the brain, is

acting under the conditions of what St. Paul calls the spiritual body. It is beside the mark to inquire whether the heaven into which Jesus was carried be some distant sun amid the swarm of celestial worlds that shine above us in the night. Our Jesus is exalted: that is the substance of our faith; that is the conviction which filled with joy the primitive community as they returned to the public worship of the earthly temple and the secret prayer of the upper room. No words of farewell are attributed to the risen and ascending Lord. He lifts His hands in blessing. He rises above, but never leaves His people. No pang of poignant regret marred the gladness of His chosen friends in that springtime of their newborn hope. The bitterness of parting belongs to the further side of Calvary. It was buried in Joseph's garden on the lower slopes of the hill. They return to Jerusalem patient yet expectant, ready for fresh revelations of the Divine presence, waiting for a new experience of the Divine power. The sudden and unexpected manifestations of the glorified Jesus—in the upper room, already consecrated, as we may well believe, by the memories of the Paschal Eve, on the highways which had often shown the print of His weary feet, on the beach where crowds had once gathered to hear His quickening words or to feel His redeeming touch—had fulfilled the purpose they were designed to accomplish. The ministry which had been con-

summed on Calvary was no brief, if triumphant, passage of the Son of God through the valley of our mortal life. Ascension, if by that term we may best describe the return of the Son of Man with pierced hands and scarred body to the bosom of the Heavenly Father, was the symbol not of an absent but of a present Master, the token not of the withdrawal but of the diffusion of power. The company of the disciples called Jesus their Lord because He had sacrificed His life for them, and because they believed that, even as they worshipped Him, He was sitting at the right hand of God.

That meant, first of all, that He was very near them. This is a truth involved in the very language of the Creed. For the God in whom they believed was no distant potentate, like an absent landlord, drawing the rents of the estate which acknowledges his ownership, but himself dwelling apart in dignified and undisturbed repose. For of old the Hebrew race had confessed a living God, whose Word was very nigh His people, and whose presence was a consuming fire. He was a God who all through the centuries had been visiting, redeeming, and dwelling among His people. He had marched at the head of His pilgrim army when Israel came out of Egypt, leading them in the daytime with a cloud and all the night through with a light of fire. Like a shepherd He had fed His flock, like a mother-bird He had

brooded over His young. God dwelling among His own people—that was the very meaning of the Tabernacle of Witness. As the nomads of Arabia pitch the tent of their sheikh in the midst of the camp, so amid the dwellings of Jacob stood the place which God had chosen to put His name there. That is how the lesson of God's nearness was brought home to the heart of Israel till at last the poet put in the mouth of a worshipping people the majestic words of the 139th Psalm :—

“ Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
 Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
 If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there;
 If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.
 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
 Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
 And Thy right hand shall hold me.”

We have only to bring together those two great lines of human experience—the God who encompasses us and the Son of Man who gave Himself for us—and at once the mind penetrates to the heart of the Saviour's teaching about His living and abiding presence, which is the kernel of Christian worship. Examine the history of religious worship, and you will find that without the real presence of the being who is adored there can be no approach to the Eternal. Instinct is always beforehand with theology. It is because God is in this place that men raise their Bethels.

It was when they no longer saw with the natural eye the form of the Master whom they loved that the disciples worshipped Him. This was the beginning of that age-long experience of the presence of Jesus into which believing Christians are gathered day by day. Claim the promise which Christ Himself has given to the fellowship of His worshipping people, and you too will find that Jesus is here. Seek Him as St. Paul sought Him in the watches of the silent night, as Stephen in the agony of martyrdom, and the Lord will stand by you, because He is standing at the right hand of God. Seek Him when, amid the songs of angels and archangels, He draws His people nigh to the joyful feast of His flesh and blood, and the words of the old Methodist hymnbook, fragrant with the experience of heavenly communions, and alive with the testimony of saints, will not long be without a meaning for you:—

“ We need not now go up to heav’n
To bring the long-sought Saviour down ;
Thou art to all that seek Thee given,
Thou dost e’en now Thy banquet crown :
To every faithful soul appear,
And show Thy real presence here.”

But the meaning of the article of the Creed in which we declare our belief that Christ sits at the right hand of God is not exhausted by an affirmation of the real presence. Witness no less than

worship is the function of the Christian Church. Catholic devotion may easily become a travesty of genuine piety if it is divorced from Evangelical power. It is a mistake to define religion without reference to the instinct of worship. It is no less fatal to allow mystical adoration to take the place of spiritual service. There is something æsthetically beautiful, yet not entirely Christian, in the spirit of Tennyson's "St. Agnes Eve," and, despite the prowess of his arms, the suspicion of a carpet knight in the figure of Sir Galahad. The Holy Grail is something less than the Christ. And the devotions of St. Paul, did we possess them, would be larger, stronger, more faithful to the spirit of the historic Christ than even the "Imitatio Christi" of St. Thomas à Kempis. The Church must be daily growing into the measure of the stature of its Master's fullness if it is to exhibit the glory of the perfect man.

Look, then, once again at this phrase, "the right hand of God," which is characteristic of that article of the Christian faith which we celebrate to-day. Let us examine it in the light of its history in Holy Scripture and we shall discern a yet larger significance than hitherto we have been able to find. Once more let us accept the guidance of those psalms which sum up the spiritual lessons and enshrine the religious history of the ancient people of God.

Listen first of all to one who cries aloud in the

day of calamity. Gloom broods upon his spirit. The purpose of good in the order of events seems no longer marching towards a victorious conclusion. Hopes have not been realised. Anticipations have not been fulfilled. God seems to be far off and goes not forth with the armies of human progress. Such periods are bound to come in the lives of nations, of Churches, of individuals. Reverence is dead. Reform has no chance. Righteousness suffers defeat. When hearts are failing, when men see not their tokens, when there is no prophet more, whither shall the sons of God look for consolation and courage? Ah! count your blessings. What hath God wrought? Church History is always a cordial for drooping spirits. "I said it is mine own infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

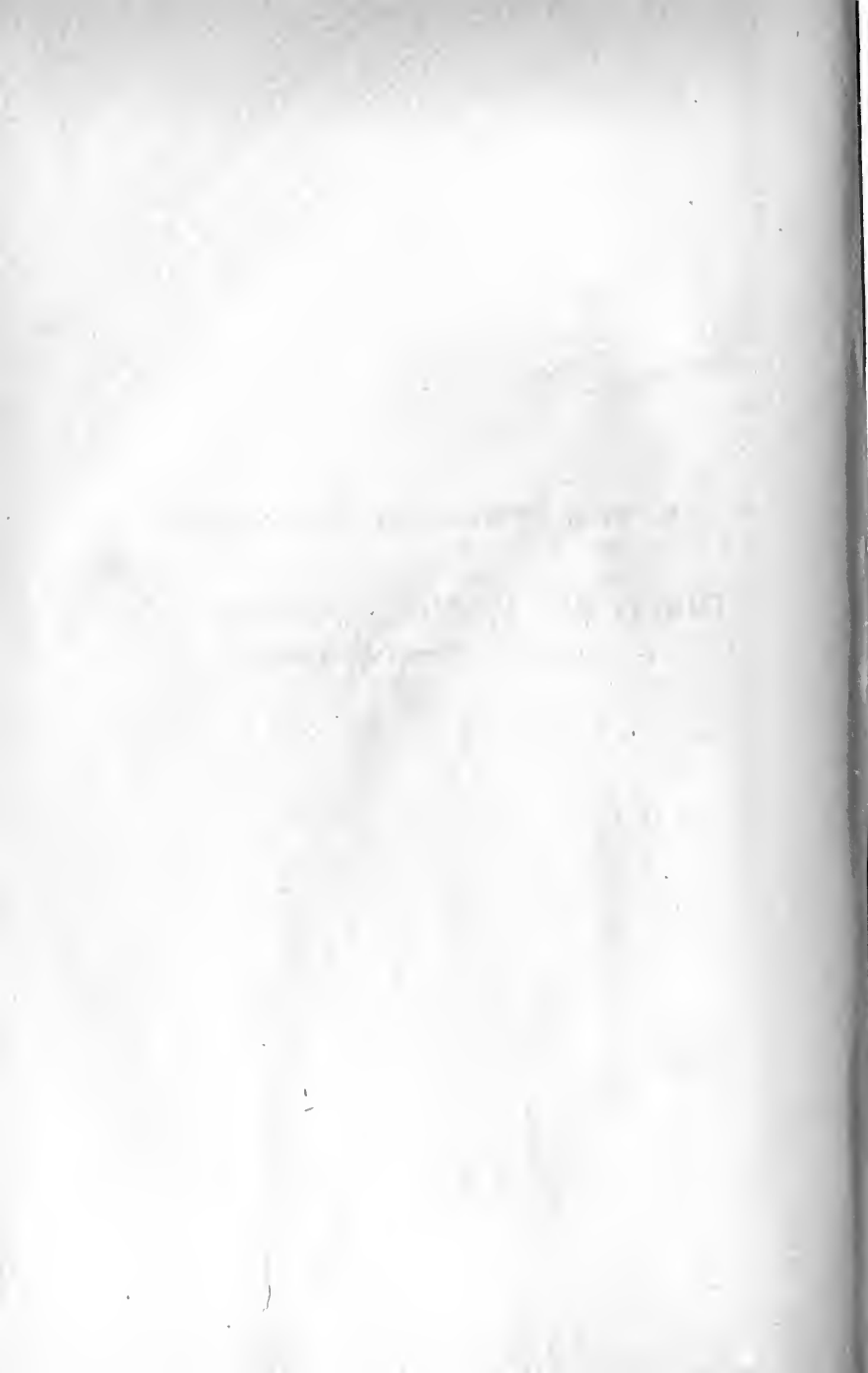
Once again it is the voice of patriotism that is uplifted in the hour of the nation's triumph. "Sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvellous things. With His own right hand and with His holy arm hath He gotten Himself the victory." Or yet again it is one who recognises a saving purpose in the discipline of his personal life, "Thy right hand shall hold me up, and Thy loving correction shall make me great." And another expresses his sense of that dependence which is the secret of strength: "My soul hangeth upon Thee; Thy right hand hath upholden me."

It was God present in power and manifestly working for the salvation of the children of men that was brought home to the heart and conscience of His people when they spoke of the right hand of the Most High. And when the risen Master vanished from the sight of His disciples in the cloud which rested upon Olivet, not only did they worship Him, but they returned to Jerusalem. Joyfully they awaited the descent of the Spirit. Henceforth they would see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power. That life and death of which they had been eye-witnesses, that Word which they had seen and handled and of which they were the chosen ministers, was but the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the commencement of that acceptable year in which the power of the Spirit was to be manifested for the salvation of the world. The mission of His faithful friends was to go everywhere proclaiming the universal message, and looking to their ascended Lord to confirm the word with signs following. They returned, they waited, they prayed, and they were filled with power from on high.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, there is no message which is going to appeal more strongly to the men and women of the twentieth century than the Gospel of Power. The lassitude which marked the closing years of the age into which we were born is already passing. The eye which

sees only the luxurious materialism of a modern capital may be blind to the true signs of the times. Yet these are not wanting. The condition of the great masses of the people is to-day awakening an interest and solicitude which have been dormant for many years. Conscience has been aroused in respect of grave common wrongs like the opium traffic with China and the influence of the liquor trade at home. Nor does it seem likely that we shall tolerate much longer the open sale of books and other merchandise which corrupt the moral fibre of the nation's youth. On every hand a new hope seems to have dawned for the forces of social progress. But deeper far than these movements is the eager quest for spiritual power that is taking possession of the coming generation. Many, no doubt, are searching for this talisman where it is not to be had. But even as in the first age of the Church it was the young men who saw visions, the servants and the handmaidens upon whom the fire of the Lord fell, so it is to-day. The Spirit of power is universal in the diffusion of His influences. It is the young men and maidens, not the official leaders of organised religion, who are preparing the way for a new realisation of the might of the Holy Ghost, the power of the ascended Christ, by claiming in this time of wide opportunity the uttermost parts of the earth for the Redeemer's kingdom and inscribing on their banners the inspiring legend, "The world for Christ in our day."

What victories may not be ours if we will trust the Man of God's right hand, the Son of Man whom He has made so strong for Himself ! Christ lives, Christ reigns, Christ conquers. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He is with us to the end of the days. If St. Paul, when he preached Christ in the provinces of Rome, could claim a new and unexpected fulfilment of the prophet's words, " Behold, I work a work in your days," why may not we, invoking the aid, not merely, like our fathers, of St. George of England, not merely of St. Michael, the captain of the celestial armies, but of the Holy Spirit Himself, renew that wonderful experience which is expressed in the ancient psalm : " The right hand of the Lord hath the pre-eminence, the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass " ?



B.—THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

THE SPIRIT IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE

Preached in Westminster Abbey.

“There is one Spirit.”

EPHESIANS iv. 2.

IV

THE SPIRIT IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE

WHEN these apostolic Christians declared their belief in the one Spirit, they were not stating a speculative proposition but expressing a vital experience. We need to recover some at least of that experience if we are even faintly to understand that "I believe in the Holy Ghost" is not a declaration of assent which Christian men must take on trust from bloodless theologians. The Acts of the Apostles was not written by a clergyman in gown and bands, but by a medical man who turned missionary. And if you want to discover what St. Paul might have been supposed to mean by the language which he uses, you must look at the pictures which this charming historian presents. To begin with, take what he says about the attractive personality of Barnabas. "Barnabas," he says, "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit." What does this mean? Well, it does not mean that he was a good Churchman who said his prayers. He had an experience, and other

people had an experience of him that was quite unmistakable. For one thing, he happened to own a bit of land. He sold it, and laid the price at the apostle's feet. I observe that a good Churchman said the other day at Swansea that security of property was the basis of civilisation. I do not care to dispute this.* But I am afraid that apostolic feet, if they were still among us, would have to wait a long while even for the offering of Ananias. There is something in the temper of the good Barnabas that is rather different from modern Churchmanship. The curate of Epworth, John Wesley tells us in his journal, once preached a sermon to show that enthusiasm was the surest way to quench the Spirit. Many substantial Christians still seem to think so.

Extreme doctrines of any kind are trying to the nerves of comfortable Englishmen. Baptisms of fire are sadly disconcerting. The latter rain of the Spirit, if it sets our sons and our daughters prophesying, like Saul in the Old Testament, had really better not be prayed for. Let us be content with "the former rain"—to adopt the translation of the Authorised Version—"moderately." Light, genial showers in their season, O Lord, if Thou wilt; but not a tempest, not a hailstorm of blessing.

Ah! there is nothing electric about the Church-

* The speaker was Lord Halsbury. This sentence does not imply agreement with the noble and learned lord. See p. 267.

manship of these times. We should think we were visited with an Egyptian plague if the fire ran along the ground. But the point to remember in reading the Acts of the Apostles is that the Christian society which is there displayed to our gaze exists in an atmosphere that is all fire. Barnabas, who sells his property, is not an eccentric. They all do it. So much is it the custom of the community that conventional people like Ananias and Sapphira invent their poor little white lie, so that, without breaking up the home, they may be in the fashion, and are shrivelled up by the leaping flame. There is no such thing as a moderate Churchman in the whole range of the Acts of the Apostles. A Christian Gallio would have been to them as impossible as a Laodicean Church. They were hot Christians, every man of them, who did not need any Church Catechism to inform them of the surprising fact that they were born again.

The Christians of these first days were of one heart and one soul simply because their Christianity was not a theology but an experience. Christian theology is, of course, the interpretation of Christian experience, and as such is as inevitable as thought. But when St. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit," he meant, "To you will be granted an experience like that which on this Pentecostal day has been ours, the presence within us of that masterful and compelling power which at

this third hour of the day is enabling every one of you to hear as in your own tongue God's wonderful works, and which the mockers ascribe to wine." Try to imagine St. Peter or St. Paul relying upon an answer in the Catechism for his knowledge of the results of baptism. Would any sane man venture to address as a really practical exhortation to a Sunday evening congregation in this Abbey St. Paul's words to the Ephesians, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit?" If a venturesome parson should embark on such a text, it would be immediately to water down the apostolic extravagance into a mild suggestion that we should try to believe, in the absence of experience, that the inward part in baptism is a new birth. It is the conventional use of such language, which all instinctively feel meant exactly what it says, to those who first used and heard it, that gives to modern preaching the hollow ring of unreal and meaningless sentences. "Full of the Holy Spirit" expresses an immense and flaming fact in the New Testament. Barnabas was not a mild pastor with a good bedside manner. When the terrified Council saw the face of Stephen as it had been the face of an angel, they gazed not upon the sweet smile of Fra Angelico's seraphim, but upon a countenance burning with God's own consuming fire, terrible as an army with banners.

Once again look at that scene in Samaria when

Peter and John came down from Jerusalem and laid their hands on the converts whom Philip had baptized. The narrative tells in all its simplicity that they received the Holy Spirit. We cite these verses conventionally enough in our confirmation classes as proof of the efficacy of the apostolic rite of laying on of hands. Now I believe with all my heart in the power which ought to accompany the laying on of hands. The Church needs to recover this teaching on a far wider scale than is satisfied by the stereotyped rite of confirmation. But I ask you to consider this. Do you really expect that any result shall follow the ministry of confirmation in the diocese of London that is at all commensurable with the statement of St. Luke, "They received the Holy Spirit"? Suppose a practitioner in some occult science, half enthusiast and half mountebank, should send in his card to the bishop after a confirmation service, and should then in presence of the disrobing clergy offer my lord a consideration, saying, "Give me also this power." He would be conducted by astonished churchwardens to the door. It is evident that there was no need of a post-confirmation address to impress these primitive candidates with the reality of the gift. It was evident to all men. It attracted the covetous eyes of Simon the Sorcerer. The story tells us that "as yet the Holy Spirit was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized." "Fallen upon"—the reference is evi-

dently to the Pentecostal manifestations. I cannot tell why this had not occurred in the case of the Samaritan Christians. I only know that such was the case. The apostles prayed; they laid on hands; then there followed such a manifestation that all, even those who were still in the gall of bitterness, could recognise the Spirit of Power. "Full of the Holy Spirit" meant the exaltation of every capacity, the exercise of unsuspected qualities, the emancipation of hidden forces. "These signs shall follow them that believe." They became Supermen in a sense more living than that of Nietzsche. Well might Simon surmise that there was money in it, and exclaim, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive [what you call] the Holy Spirit."

Or look at it another way. Is there anything more deplorable than the bathos of our sick visiting as compared with the dealings, I will not say of a Peter with an Æneas or of a Paul in the household of the headman of Malta, but with the practice of the primitive presbyter in the chamber of the suffering Christian? "Let him call for the elders of the Church," said St. James. For what purpose? That over an unconscious form they might murmur a prayer from a book of devotions as the Anglican counterpart of Extreme Unction, and hardly less a corrupt following of the apostles, so that when at length the patient passed away

and sorrowing relatives drew his burial money there might be no reflections? No! The atmosphere of that joyous society of Jesus was full of life triumphant and grace abounding! "Let him call for the elders of the Church . . . and the prayer of faith shall save the sick." "My friend, Jesus Christ makes thee whole." "Wilt thou, hast thou the will to be made whole?" "Hast thou faith to be healed?" "Do you believe that God wills your health, that He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth? Then, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, take up thy bed and walk." Nothing shows more clearly than the feeble practice of the Church that we have ceased to understand what it is for priest and people to be full of the Holy Ghost. We have abdicated in favour of Mrs. Baker Eddy. We need to call upon our Lord God with contrite hearts to revive His work in the midst of the days. There will be fewer sick-headaches, fewer nervous breakdowns necessitating complete change of scene, less lassitude, more vigour, more of what the French call *joie de vivre*, if only we can pray with a full belief that it can come true—

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire."

Now, of course, we must not fall into the old error of confounding the gift of the Holy Spirit with its manifestations. Do all speak with tongues? We

may rightly covet earnestly the greater gifts. But, as St. Paul reminds us in First Corinthians, there is a more excellent way. But the point is that to be filled with the Spirit was in the first age, and should be still, a real and concrete experience such as might be compared by the mocker and contrasted by the apostle with the effects of wine. Those who were living the lives of baptized men and using the laying on of hands believed, not that they received Divine grace neatly done up in nicely differentiated sacramental parcels, but that within the home of the Christian body they were brought into living communion with the burning personality of the Eternal Spirit, whose fiery breath consumed sin and quickened into flame souls that were open to His influence. So again and again the house where they were assembled was shaken by the Divine coming. They were not afraid of earthquakes : we are.

We tone down the great doctrine of sanctification till it suits our timidity. Conversion we of course dismiss entirely as altogether too sudden and upsetting a possibility to be for a moment entertained by good Churchmen. It is an offence against sobriety only to be matched by drastic views on temperance. What we declare our belief in is progressive sanctification, the more progressive the better. For the present, a mild suggestion of goodness at a Sunday evening service, when we sing "one step enough for me" sufficiently repre-

sents that of which the apostle speaks when he delivers the majestic utterance "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." The background of our thought is quite different from his. We represent to ourselves the spiritual life as a sort of current laid on—if we are good Churchmen—through exiguous sacramental pipes, the flow of which may be conveniently regulated by a temperate use of the means of grace. But St. Paul says that these bodies of ours are shrines of the Holy Spirit, sanctuaries which God Himself must inhabit, the permanent mansions of a Real Presence whose glory fills the temple. The veriest heathen would think it an act of sacrilege to represent his divinity with one foot through the door of the dwelling wholly dedicated to him. The figures which the New Testament uses are infinitely truer to the Catholic Faith than the ideas which underlie a great deal of what passes for Catholic teaching. "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God." You cannot take God inside your heart unless He fills it. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye doors of Mansoul, and the King of Glory shall come in." So, when in the darkness of the Straight Street, Ananias was sent to the blind but praying Saul, "The Lord, even Jesus," said he, "hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

So I come to my last point. We want to feel a great and masterful authority behind our lives.

If you read in the 13th chapter of the Acts, you will find how, when the Church of Antioch was about to send forth the two apostles upon what from our schooldays we have known as the first missionary journey, "the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." There can be no doubt that this was at the mouth of the prophets who are spoken of as present in the church at this solemn and fateful meeting. This was not an ordination, but that the exercise of the same ministry was joined with the imposition of hands in this rite also seems probable from the fact that Timothy is bidden not to neglect the gift that was given him "by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership." Would that our own pastors were so chosen! We contrast an authoritative voice like this with the cautious certificate of the modern archdeacon: "I have inquired of, and also examined them, and am assured by your lordship's chaplains that on the whole these gentlemen have reached the standard of the diocese."* We sigh for the authoritative voice above all in the missionary enterprise of the Church. Some people think that it exists, in the Pope, for example, not because conscience recognises it, but because he sits in Peter's seat. Well, I do not wish to discourage any legitimate ministry, even that of the humblest

* A paraphrase of the Archdeacon's reply to the Bishop's "Take heed, &c." in the Ordination Service.

presbyters, from relying upon that power in which alone they can discharge an office transmitted in whatever degree from those to whom it was first said, "Receive the Holy Ghost." But surely an inferential, or what lawyers would call a constructive, presence of the Spirit would have seemed a strange idea to that company at Antioch who entrusted a momentous mission to Barnabas and Saul. "The Holy Spirit said": no Christian man could doubt it: no faithful disciple upon whom the claim was laid could dare to disobey it. They had to go or be judged by the Master Himself as unprofitable servants.

To that glorious certainty with regard to the will of the Spirit we shall only return through a revival of His work in our midst. Be not afraid of His power. Let us trust ourselves to His unconquerable might. Revive Thy work, O Lord. Drop down, ye heavens. Descend, thou Paraclete, upon a people that awaits Thee. Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come. Shake the house. In flame our lives. Inspire our tongues. And the testimony of Jesus shall be the Spirit of prophecy.



THE HOLY SPIRIT AN EXPERIENCE

"Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

EPHESIANS i. 13.

V

THE HOLY SPIRIT AN EXPERIENCE

THE Christian Society was slower to formulate its belief in the Holy Spirit than to declare the Deity of Christ. One reason for this delay is not very far to seek. The Spirit was so much a fact of present experience to the Apostolic Church that the possession of this gift was the pledge of all Christian truth, the Light in which the disciple saw Light. The Spirit is the experience.

Nothing is more impalpable than belief in the Holy Spirit for those who are unaware of His presence and power. Nothing less needs verification for those who are open to His influence. Life is its own attestation.

When the apostle urged his readers to be "strong in the Lord" he was using no figure of speech for earnest moral effort. He was asking them to make effective use of spiritual forces the operation of which was perfectly familiar to all primitive Christians. A new power was immanent in the fellowship of

Christ's disciples, which in a very literal sense made all things possible to them that believed. What was inconceivable to the world was perfectly natural within the body of believers. Birth was the only analogy under which it could be represented. They had seen; they had entered into a new kingdom. The words which the appendix to St Mark's Gospel attributes to Him who was the author and finisher of their faith express what was a living experience to the community that had confessed His name and accepted His baptism. "In My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

It is comparatively unimportant whether those words were actually spoken by Jesus or not. They stand for what was actually proving itself in the daily experience of the Church at the time when from a primitive source they were appended to a torn page of the original gospel in order to complete its testimony. No doubt they were understood by those who had listened to the Lord's own promise of the Spirit to express what Jesus meant when He declared that His followers would be endowed with power from on high. Something had come into the corporate life of men upon the earth

which proved not only to those who shared it, but to those who witnessed its activities, that Jesus of Nazareth was not an isolated phenomenon in the world's history, but the forerunner of a new order, the beginning of a new creation. To believe in the Holy Ghost was not for the first Christians, nor should it be for us, the mere acknowledgment of a transcendent and incomprehensible mystery, but the interpretation of intimate and incontestable realities ; of a presence closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

When Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica people said that they were turning the world upside down. There is nothing very much calculated to upset mundane calculations in the sermons preached from our pulpits. In spite of the fact that the society in which we live is nominally Christian, it is impossible to avoid the uncomfortable reflection that there ought to be. Christianity, when it came into the world as preached by the apostles, was unquestionably a fact that was disturbing to the routine of society, because it stood for the inrush of a new life, the value of which could only be appraised by its possessors, but the effects of which were immediately apparent in new powers, unexpected victories, inexplicable martyrdoms. Jerusalem could do nothing with Stephen but stone him, and that, unfortunately for the per-

secutors, in presence of a young man whose name was Saul.

What would have happened last Tuesday afternoon* if, after the confirmation, when curates and teachers were busy shepherding their candidates with a view to another service and another address in the evening, a stranger, giving his name as Simon Magus, had approached the Bishop in the vestry, saying, "Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Spirit"? Yet that is what occurred when Peter and John had laid their hands on Philip's converts at Samaria. Consider what this imposition of hands must have meant, if Simon thought there was money in the affair. Imagination, dwelling, as it almost necessarily must, on the public associations which surround the rite of the laying of hands in our own day, would scarcely credit a charlatan of the type of Simon with the desire, not, of course, to obtain the temporalities of a bishopric, but the authority to impose episcopal hands by payment of an equivalent in cash, or, as we might call it, by buying the goodwill of the business. But, if only we can transport ourselves in thought into New Testament times, the aspect of the matter is entirely changed. For we see, first of all, the strange

*The sermon was preached in Leeds Parish Church on the Sunday following a confirmation.

phenomena of the day of Pentecost : the little company of Jesus changed almost beyond recognition in the sight of the multitude that thronged Jerusalem, so that mockers had even some colour for the baseless assertion that these men were filled with new wine. They who but a few weeks before had shrunk in craven fear from the side of their abandoned Master, now proclaimed, in fiery utterances which men of every nation under heaven could but describe as their own tongue in which they were born, the Name, which in deed and even in word they had denied, as the source of eternal salvation to all who could receive it. They had seen the mighty works which had shown themselves in the memorable ministry of Him who had been crucified, repeating themselves in the doings of apostles—the lame walking, the blind receiving their sight, the poor once again listening to the good news of an acceptable year. It was not a distant redemption the receipt of which could be attested by no immediate experiences, not a distribution of bills to be honoured only in an eternity beyond the grave, that St. Peter and his companions, like mediæval pardoners,* were thus announcing in the streets of Jerusalem. No ; it was patent, evident, undeniable facts that gathered the crowds around the

* The English name, as readers of Chaucer know, for those who sold indulgences.

Nazarene preachers on the memorable Whitsun festival. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you," and the same mystic life which already distinguishes the members of the brotherhood shall be yours also, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Then followed the repeated manifestations of a new power within the circle of the Christian congregation. Men could tell how the very house in which they were assembled seemed to shake; how as they continued in prayer they were uplifted into an atmosphere which to the world around is no more to be described than the afflatus of the poet or the inspired moments of the musician or the vision of the prophet. What the speaking with tongues may have been I do not presume to pronounce. All I know is that St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians is unimpeachable evidence of the fact that it was a phenomenon so characteristic of the assembly of Christians that it became positively necessary for him to explain that one gift was no more essential to the possession of the Spirit than another; but that the Divine Author of life Himself distributed as He would those manifestations of His presence and power which were required for the service of the whole body. What, however, is beyond all question is this, that the community in the midst of which the New Testament had its

birth was aware of a great, a mighty, a Divine life, surging and pulsing within it, and that all its statements with regard to this Spirit, the phrases which it uses, the arguments which it develops, must be read in the light of what the book of the Acts discloses about prophecy, and healing, and Divine influence upon human life. The men "full of the Spirit" who were chosen to discharge special missions or to fill particular ministries were not merely persons of irreproachable character, who had, so to speak, an unusual number of good conduct marks against their names. They were men "of good report," no doubt, and the record is careful to say so. But they were men before whom even unbelievers quailed when they beheld the terror of the Lord in faces that resembled those of angels, or marvelled at the boldness of those of whom yet they took knowledge that they had been with Jesus. The narrative of the primitive Church does not for a moment imply that all spoke with tongues or that all prophesied. It nowhere implies that the fruit of the Spirit is not love but power, not mercy but miracle. Yet it is abundantly evident that it was not the mere heroism of the soldier in which the martyrs "met the tyrant's brandished sword, the lion's gory mane." It was a new experience of a superhuman presence, which for the Christian changed all the values of the life

of men upon the earth. And that experience the Christians themselves recognised as the Holy Spirit.

What a marvellous change passes over all the language which the apostle uses in the Epistle to the Ephesians, when once it is clearly apprehended that its sentences have a wonderful counterpart in what was not only believed but felt in the infant community to which the letter is addressed. Their belief was not merely the expression of their experience, or it would cease to be belief. Their experience was only the firstfruits, to use the apostle's own figure—"We have the firstfruits of the Spirit"—but it was the pledge. Faith was already beginning to work out in experience, so that the experience itself became not only the basis of yet further faith, but the very atmosphere in which alone faith became possible.

Nature is full of analogies of the sovereign truth that men need to be quickened, to be born, to be created before they can see things as they really are. Progressive discernment of the great facts of existence is nothing else but the adjustment of the focus. First, it may be, we see men as trees walking, and then little by little accuracy of observation grows; we see each delicate proportion, each subtle manifestation, the play of feature, the significance of gesture,

the disclosure of meaning and purpose. But the blind man taps his benighted way through a world of form, of colour, of visible beauty. The dew glistens on the grass, the mists trail over the mountains, the sun rises in orange and purple, but he knows it not. I stand there in my stall during the anthem, and to me, it may be, who long to sing "When I survey the wondrous cross," it seems but an interminable confusion of verse, and chorus, and recitative; while you, who have trodden the inner courts of the palace of music, are watching with reverent wonder the building of yet another house of God not made with hands.

So is it with every one that is born of the Spirit. Not that this wonderful gift is denied to any of the sons of men. Blind and deaf must remain bound in their mortal prison-house, unless Jesus of Nazareth passing by shall anoint the eyes or touch the ear. But of this other gift it is written, "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life," "Knock, and it shall be opened," "Ask, and ye shall receive." Yet nowhere is it more clearly asserted than in the Epistle to the Ephesians that it is only in the Spirit that the mystery of God is disclosed. If it is through Christ it is in the Spirit that we have access to the Father, that Spirit in which alone we call Him Father. And the mystery of Christ—as St. Paul here calls it—the wonderful mystery of universal redemption in the blood of

the Cross—it is only in the Spirit that this has been made known to the apostles and prophets, and through them to those whom God has chosen from the foundation of the world. The heavenly places, of which the Epistle speaks again and again, are just that vantage-ground of spiritual vision from which the saints review the story of the universe.

For it is all a work of the Spirit. See how the Saviour Himself from the moment of His baptism saw His life of service, His victory through death, unfolded before Him in the power of the anointing, the consecrating Spirit; how in the Spirit He was driven into the wilderness to meet the ordeal of fire by which He was annealed for His redemptive Cross. See how one New Testament writer after another with sympathetic insight represents the Son of Man as through the eternal Spirit offering Himself without spot to God and through the same indwelling presence raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father! It is the Spirit which—no, I cannot say which, I must say Who—alone can show us the shining vesture of Him who has the keys of Death and of Hades in the coarse garments of the Syrian peasant arraigned before Annas and condemned by Pilate, for no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is the Spirit who alone can show us in that figure stumbling along the way of sorrows none other than Jehovah Himself, travelling in the greatness of His strength mighty to save. None other but

the Spirit can put a new song in our mouths, as we uplift our eyes to the deserted cross, bidding us cry with the innumerable company of celestial choirs, and with the spirits of the just, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

This is the voice, the power, the energy, the presence, felt within us as ourselves yet lifting us above ourselves, that we acclaim as the Lord and the Giver of Life. It will be in proportion as we acknowledge the Spirit as a power in our own lives, dominating heart and thought and will, controlling our motives, directing our aims, enlightening our minds, that we shall add our witness to the record of the witnessing Church. Life—it is this wonderful possession which in every age adds its testimony to the historical record of the water and the blood. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall shine upon thee." They who with joy are drawing water out of the wells of salvation, who claim the boundless possibilities for flesh as well as soul contained in that vital spark of heavenly flame which has been enkindled within the fellowship of Christ, and whose will it is to prove the victory that overcomes the world, learn by an experience which grows with the years that there is one body and one Spirit, one name given under heaven whereby we may be saved, one God and Father of all.



C.—THE CHURCH AND THE SACRAMENTS

THE DIVINE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

In Blackburn Parish Church at the Manchester Diocesan Conference, 1910.

“One, even as We.”

JOHN xvii. 22.

VI

THE DIVINE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

HERE we have our Lord's own conception of the unity of the Christian Church. His words, like all religious realities, are more true than plain. Their simplicity is the measure of their depth. "One, even as We." A unity that is neither legal nor moral, but vital, natural, Divine. One body, as well as one Spirit—a secret life and an organic system. One, not like an empire, but like the world, the plastic principle of which is the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

The action of Jesus Christ, whereby He gave being to the Christian Society, is that of a creator, not a founder. He gives no constitution, formulates no articles, imposes no canons. Having called unto Him whom He Himself would, He appoints twelve that they may be with Him, and that He may send them forth. The authority with which He endows them is expressed in language suggestive rather of moral principle than of positive enactment. Their credentials are the possession not of documentary evidence, but of

spiritual power. Their fellowship is cemented in a common meal, in which they are at once the guests of the Master and the receivers of His innermost life. They are to go everywhere, gathering disciples after the example of the Baptist, but in the spirit and power of the Highest. In all this we see rather the possibilities, the elements, the undeveloped and embryonic beginnings of a community, than the formal foundation of an institution. Who shall say when the Church began to exist? The other day I took part in a procession in Salford, which celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Independent Order of Rechabites, and professed to start from the very spot on which this society was inaugurated. That is always possible in the case of a human institution with its external and visible construction. But it is not true of anything that may be called Divine, because it is prepared in the matrix of universal nature. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, nor how the bones do grow in the womb"—there is the analogy, as the ancient writer saw, and as Christ Himself reminds us, of all things Divine. They are not joiner-work. They emerge; they are manifested; they are with us, and we know it not. I am only repeating a truism when I point out that this is the difference between what is machine-made and what grows, between Divine facts and human inventions. Creation is not an event of history, and therefore any criticisms of the first

chapter of Genesis based on such a supposition are irrelevant from the beginning. Creation is an ever-present yet unseen fact, which lies at the back of existence. It is that inward energy of life which is ever pushing up on to the theatre of visible manifested being. And the Church is created, not constructed. Did it begin to be when Jesus, despairing of the synagogue as the home of the Messianic kingdom, went up into the mountain apart and called unto Him whom He would? Or did it start from the confession of St. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi and the *donation* of the keys? Or from the *accipe Spiritum sanctum*, since repeated in a thousand ordinations, when the words were first uttered by the risen Lord? Or is the phrase of popular theology correct when it speaks of Pentecost as the birthday of the Church? Using the language of metaphor, our Saviour speaks in the future tense of building His Church. But no man ever saw Him building. "Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprang." Christ, being a prophet, does not explain Himself. In His choice of the Twelve, in His gift of authority, in the communion of the upper room, in the breath which conveys the spirit, in the final mission of the apostles, we catch glimpses of something that seems to be forming itself in the redemptive purpose, but of which the Master's words to St. Peter are true, "What I do thou knowest not now." The whole method of Jesus was to gather

those about Him who should watch Him work, and who should gain from their intercourse with Him hints and suggestions of the Eternal Purpose now coming to the birth in the living and developing body prepared for it. When He was risen from the dead, His disciples perceived and boldly proclaimed the necessity of His sufferings. When the Church existed, not as a regulated institution, but as a natural brotherhood, made of one because animated and empowered by a common spirit, expressing its unity in the fellowship of a common meal, owning one allegiance, practising one rite of solemn initiation, expectant of one event, they recognised with St. Paul the mystery hidden in Christ from the beginning, implicit in the history of Israel, and now unfolding itself in those manifold adaptations to diverse needs, the possibilities of which could only be exhausted with the consummation of human progress.

This surely is what Christ meant by a unity which should reflect, nay, which should express, the unity of the Father and the Son. The Church is a Divine society, not because it was founded by a Divine Person, but because it was created, just as the Word became flesh, in the development of the Divine purpose. Just as there stood among men One whom at first they knew not, but whom at length the faithful learned to recognise as their Lord and their God, their Advocate with the Father and the propitiation for their sins, so also, as the sequel of

His redeeming work, as the result of the obedient proclamation of His gospel, there sprang into existence a society which anticipates ecclesiastical institutions no less than the families of the earth anticipate the states and constitutions under which they organise and express themselves.

The difference between a life which finds expression in the body and the most delicately balanced system is, no doubt, somewhat too subtle for the ordinary purposes of current affairs, but it is none the less necessary to recognise it if we are to gain or to preserve the true adjustment in regard to the higher problems of the Christian society. How many have been warmed with the glow of a newly discovered Churchmanship, and felt the kindling of a spirit of brotherhood and service, when they have read the Epistle to the Ephesians, with its revelation of the one body and one Spirit; the joints and bands, the organs and functions of a visible, tangible, structural unity beating with an inward life manifested in every part: a heavenly ideal, if you will, but an actual, present fact of experience. No one can understand the stirring picture of the Church of Christ which the apostle sets before our eyes who does not perceive that, whatever may be meant by body, the words are emptied of all reality, deprived of all intelligible meaning, if body be practically taken as synonymous with spirit, if it does not convey the idea of organised structure as distinct from

dynamic energy. The clergyman who prepared me for confirmation answered my question about baptism of water and the Spirit, as taught by our Saviour in the Fourth Gospel, by saying that the stress was on the Spirit, and only succeeded in causing my youthful mind to speculate why the water should have been mentioned at all. Nor can we doubt for a moment that it was just the churchly enthusiasm which finds expression in "The Church's one foundation" that the great apostle himself felt and desired to awaken in his readers when he wrote the words "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." But when we have descended from the mountain of vision to the plain of ecclesiastical politics and Christian organisation, where we meet with papal claims, or the right of the episcopate, or parity of ministers, or indeed any of those questions upon which the restoration of external unity practically turns, the language of St. Paul seems suddenly to elude us, and to be available only for the genial rhetoric of a question-begging peroration. The truth is that it is one thing to be convinced that the Church has a body as well as a spirit, it is another to assert an absolute identity between its bodily expression and institutions venerable even to the extent of an origin that may claim to be apostolic.

The same distinction must be borne in mind when we are thinking of Christ's wonderful

promise that hell's gates shall not prevail against the Church. When the sun is hidden by the driving wrack, and the hurricane sweeps down upon the swirling waters of the loch, what patience, what courage, what power takes possession of the boat's crew, as they toil gallantly at the creaking rowlocks, remembering that the Lord sits above the waterfloods, that His promise stands like the distant ben which looms out of the shrouding mists! The promise of the Church is the assurance of that same unfailing purpose which upholds men in the press and peril of faithful work when, like Livingstone in Africa, they can say, "My life is charmed till my work is done." It is the Christian counterpart of the oath which God swore to David, and which accomplished itself not through the success but through the failure of the dynasty to which it was given, and which reached its victorious fulfilment amid the ruins of Jerusalem. Yet how often do men trust not in the Divine fact but in the human institution! We will insist upon telling our Lord God what the cause is that we expect Him to maintain, and are confounded because we see not our tokens. We are like the old Scots dame who had a reputation for a faith which, as she averred, could remove mountains. Tibbie had a pedlar's licence, and travelled in her little pony-cart from farm to farm. One day she was discovered sitting

disconsolate among the ruins of her cart, the pony with tattered harness standing by. "Eh, Tibbie, woman," was her friend's exclamation, "whaur's your trust?" "I'd ay faith," sobbed the auld wife, "till the breechin' brak'." When I hear that some distressed priest is reconsidering his whole position, the validity of Anglican orders and all the rest of it, because some perplexed and worried bishop has in the simplicity of his honest heart interpreted a rubric in defiance of the whole Catholic Church, I think of the broken breeching, and poor Tibbie sitting on the dusty grass. We see not our tokens. Because religion is sacramental, we rely on technicalities. But the Word of God is not bound. Has history nothing to tell us of the strange and unexpected paths by which the Lord wins through to the goal of His everlasting purpose? The Lord will come to His temple, but it will be suddenly, unexpectedly, as He came before. Man's extremity is God's opportunity, and the fallibility of the Church is now, as it always has been, the guarantee of His power. It is the Divine thing itself, not the hedge whereby we seek to protect it, that is inviolable.

This is, as I have said, a distinction which there was never more need to remember than now. When we are presented with the alternative that either there is no such thing as a visible, historical, living organism called the Church, or that its

existence is inseparably bound up with certain constitutional forms, the acceptance of which must be a prelude to all scientific investigation, we are bound to decline the dilemma. When, again, we are required to confess either that heresy is the bugbear of a narrow bigotry, and that there is no secure authority in matters of faith, or else exempt from discussion and inquiry the creeds and formulas by which Christian communities have endeavoured to preserve with what is at best an approximate success the truth once for all delivered, then again we must affirm that the one faith, like the one Church, is a fact more subtle and therefore more Divine than the institutions which represent it, and that a Chestertonian orthodoxy is not, nor ever shall be, the same thing as the Christian gospel.

Is it stalwart faith, or is it nervous dread, which to-day shrinks from the task imposed upon us by the conditions of the time of revising the English Prayer Book, or reconsidering our attitude towards the Athanasian Creed? Do they really believe in the one body and one spirit, the one faith and one baptism, who are always seeking to induce a paralysis of living effort by threatening division, or ringing the changes on the verb "to tamper," or telling us of something awful that will surely happen if the army of the living God does aught but mark time on its own ground? To me, the very tenacity with which the trusting soul has

clasped the feet of its crucified, redeeming Lord will be the measure of the patient faith with which he considers how the language in which the stammering lips, even of a believing Church, have sought expression for a truth that is Divine, may be made more accurately to represent to the new age the wonderful works of God.

Or if it is not the unity of the faith, but the reunion of the body, that has the first place in our thoughts, we shall remember once again that "one, even as We" stands for a unity that accomplishes itself, because it is a fact of the Divine order. The preservation not only of the inward energy of the one Spirit, but of the organic structure of the one body, belongs alike to the purpose and to the action of God Himself. A veil of uncertainty obscures those early stages of development that link the beginnings of the Church in the New Testament with the forms into which its institutions have crystallised. May we not, without any suspicion of disloyalty to our own traditions, guarded as they have been with scrupulous fidelity to the principle of continuity, believe that this is designed in the providence of God to save us from trusting in ourselves, and to fix the conviction of our hearts in Him that raiseth the dead? To doubt that the Divine Society, when, by the living wisdom of the Heavenly Father, it is again brought together in one visible union and fellowship, will, with Christ for a corner-stone, possess the marks

of its apostolic foundation, would be to surrender that belief in the holy Church which has been the focus of living Christian experience and the inspiration of saints. But who shall say that even "the historic episcopate" (as the phrase is), true though it may be in contrast with the other ecclesiastical theories which divide the suffrages of Christians, or with that sublime superiority which regards such speculations as things indifferent, fully represents what is eternal and Divine? Only in controversies that are political rather than religious do men profess to believe in undenominationalism, and this only because they understand not what they say or what they confidently affirm. The best religious thought of our time is reaching up to something better and truer. The spirit which expressed itself in the World Missionary Conference, or which animates endeavours so nobly Christian as the Student Movement, has the promise of the future. It is the positive truths of the gospel, not the residuary propositions of religion, that are rallying men of deep conviction to the banner of which the legend is "The world for Christ in this generation." How deplorable it will be if we fail to use the opportunity, which the new reverence for the experience of all groups and associations of Christian men has opened before us, to read afresh the lessons of history in the true spirit of scientific inquiry which refuses to foreclose results. Are we strong enough, are we brave

enough, are we fearless enough for the task? Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire! So shall the Holy and undivided Trinity perfect the fabric of Holy Church.

THE PATTERN ORDINATION

At the Advent Ordination in Canterbury Cathedral, 1909.

“ Whom they set before the apostles ; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”

ACTS vi. 6.

VII

THE PATTERN ORDINATION

WE need not ask the question whether the Seven upon whom the apostles laid their hands were, as has been usually supposed, the first deacons or not. Far more important for us to consider are the great principles of ordination which their appointment exemplifies. Public choice, prayer, apostolic consecration—all alike are present in the first instance of the making of ministers which the history of the Church records.

In the recently published *Life of Dr. Rainy*, there is suggested an instructive contrast between the short sentence in which the great leader of the United Free Church describes his accession to the ranks of the Presbyterian pastorate and the tedious letter in which Mr. Gladstone announced to his father the considerations which appeared to be leading him to the ministry of the Church of England. The famous statesman, who at one time was all but a priest, labours to set forth the dignity of the office, the greatness of the end which it proposes and the means which it adopts, the deep need of

human nature which it is intended to supply. This exposition, in the opinion of the biographer, would to the Scots minister have seemed but to skirmish round the only real question, What is there to convince me that I am called to this momentous work? Robert Rainy, who in 1843, when the Scottish Disruption took place, was a young medical student, said simply and straightforwardly, "That year made me a minister."

What is meant by contrasting the attitude of these two remarkable men is this, that while Gladstone was left to parley with his own conception of the clerical life, Rainy was driven forward to his destiny by the circumstances which were shaping his career.

Now, as it seems to me, the Christian ministry, as we witness the process of its formation in the New Testament, involves the laying on of hands in a wider sense than is satisfied by the form which ultimately signifies to each individual who answers the call the sealing of the Divine choice. It is a principle of selection which demands in those who respond to the call a trained faculty of observation rather than the habit of introspective retirement. The world in which we live is such that response to fact is more trustworthy than reliance upon feeling. I should not wish to dogmatise on the highly intricate, and as yet imperfectly developed, science of mind. But may we not say that the characteristic of those men who lead is not so

much an originality of thought which creates ideas as a delicacy of perception which recognises the significance of facts? Be this as it may, the calls of the gospel, which lie behind the institution of the ministry, sacramental though we must believe them to have been, are too obviously external to be confused with inward movements of the personal life. Simon and Andrew are casting a net into the sea, when Jesus calls them to become fishers of men. No time is offered or asked for prayerful consideration of the fateful invitation. They left all and followed Him. James and John were mending their nets. Straightway Jesus called them. As straightly they left their father. Matthew's ledger lies before him on the desk, when, warned by no inward monitor but summoned by a living voice, he enters the service of the Master. No duly expected ember hours precede that vivid scene, which St. Mark records, when Jesus went up into the mountain, called to Him whom He Himself would, and made Twelve. Nor was it only those first vocations which were realised, not in the growth of subjective assurance, but in obedience to imperious facts. With these, perhaps, it could scarcely have been otherwise. But take the case of the apostle of the Gentiles. St. Paul meditates in an Arabian desert before he receives the right hand of fellowship from the apostles at Jerusalem. But of his mission to the world he was already convinced before he under-

took his solitary journey. Jesus of Nazareth had appeared to him as externally, so he believed, on the Damascus road as to Peter when he forsook his fishing-boat, or to Matthew when he quitted his toll-booth. "Have I not seen the Lord?"

Nor is the case different with those who, as the several functions of the ministry are developed, take their place within its ordered ranks. They do not offer themselves for the service. The inward movement is a response. The Church lays its hand upon them. Their appointment arises out of a need which reveals itself in the course of the Church's progressive life. Defective administration in the relief of widows has aroused discontent. The apostles suggest. The society approves. "Look ye out from among yourselves seven men of good report, full of the Spirit, and of wisdom, whom we may set over this business." The seven were accordingly chosen. "And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." What we seem to see is God anticipating those whom He Himself will put into the ministry, in the need of the Christian community, in the apostolic suggestion, in the public election, in the imposition of hands. That murmuring among the Hellenists, St. Stephen might have said in the blunt phrase of Dr. Rainy, made me a minister.

We cannot imagine any one of these men wondering in after years whether he had not after all mistaken his profession. If in later life the

promise of earlier days was not fulfilled, there could be no doubt about the call. Even Judas, who betrayed his Master, was certainly called by Jesus Christ. St. Paul had been put into the ministry. This was a matter of fact, as axiomatic as his own birth. The only doubt was whether he, who had preached to others, should himself be finally rejected. It was a case of pressing on towards the mark, not of doubting whether he had ever really started. He was "called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of Jesus Christ." I doubt whether any inner experience, unchecked by the inevitableness of visible facts, could ever, in face of the fightings and fears of a perilous career, have given birth to an assurance such as this.

We may well contrast this apostolic certainty with the doubts and hesitations that surround the approach to holy orders, and too often recur, in the case of those who in these later times are received into the ranks of the ministry. One reason is, no doubt, that we have lost the intensity of the early Christians, which nothing but a recovery of the Pentecostal Spirit will revive in our midst. But this is not all. The Spirit is with us day by day, leading us in the circumstances of our life, but our sons and our daughters, our servants and our handmaidens are not taught to recognise in that leadership the voice that calls. What a great thing it was for Samuel's peace of mind that at first he mistook the Lord's voice for

that of Eli! There was no doubt about the voice. He had but to recognise from whom it came. The history of the Church has deprived the Holy Ghost, if we may reverently put it thus, of that organ of public choice and election through which He can articulate in the language of plain external facts the demand which He desires to make upon the individual life. This morning we are to witness the sealing for their ministry of those whom we set before the pastoral chair. But what has gone before this hour in the case of each one of these men? Who brought them hither? Let us not doubt that it was the loving Spirit who led them forth into the land of service. But how has the Christian community discharged its responsibility towards them? What was there to correspond to the apostolic suggestion, the public choice, the outstretched hand of the brotherhood that has itself looked them out from among its members?

My mind travels back over the years which preceded my own ordination. My good father, now with God, taught me the Scots paraphrases and the English collects. He loved them both. From my mother I learned to know the Scriptures. Then came the days of school. My masters earned the gratitude of their pupil for many lessons which have remained through life, but none, so far as memory serves, bore specially upon the ministry of the Word. These it was, perhaps, hardly their business to impart. A friend I had, a little older

than myself, who opened up new and hitherto unfamiliar lines of ecclesiastical thought from a somewhat surreptitious study of the *Church Times*. When at length I reached Oxford, a Fellow of my college, now the Bishop of Birmingham, sought me out, a friendless freshman, and he was always kind. It was at his suggestion that five years later I decided to accept a title to holy orders from the Vicar of Leeds. Now what impresses me most about this short summary of the steps by which a young man reached the sacred ministry—and surely it is typical of the path that has been trodden by many another—is the weight that it throws upon the choice of the individual. All over England to-day, in our schools and in our universities, in our workshops and in our offices, in crowded streets, in rural villages, there are coming to maturity young men of whom the Church as yet knows nothing. Some of them will one day swim into its ken, when, overcoming all those obstacles which we at least have done nothing to remove, they approach a bishop as candidates for ordination. Can we conceive of Stephen, of Philip, of Timothy as candidates? The very term comes from a circle of ideas remote from the conception of the Christian Church. “Put me into the priest’s office” is a request appropriate to those who, knocking at preferment’s door, desire a living that they may eat a piece of bread; it ill befits the called of God. The spectacle which we see

in modern times is strangely unlike apostolic Christianity. The Church's official representatives must perforce wait for men to emerge, by a sort of providential selection, from the mass of unknown possibility which the youth of the nation presents. Men are determined as to their career by some chance suggestion or impelled to offer themselves by the sheer power of personal conviction. Too often it is a fitful gleam that lights the path. Again and again the wavering falter and fall back. Other calls and other careers take their toll of lives that, if only a strong hand had been laid upon them, might have fulfilled a joyful service in the ministry for which, it may be, God designed them. Then there are those hours, those days, those months, perhaps, of doubt, hesitation, struggle, which men who in the end join our ranks have often to encounter when the Voice seems too faint to catch, the Hand too impalpable to grasp, the quest too high to follow. Is the desire, after all, nothing but the enthusiasm of their more exalted moments? Is what perchance they had imagined to be a call nothing but the baseless fabric of a dream? The Christian Society has never interested itself in the matter of their ordination. It has never moved a finger to bring together the worker and the work. Why should we expect Christ to grip the lives of men if we will not lend Him our hands?

Here, then, is a very solemn obligation which

God imposes upon the Church to-day. "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you . . . men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." We retain the laying on of hands. But what right have we to claim the fullness of spiritual power or to be surprised at the growth of a mechanical ecclesiasticism if we are content to leave in abeyance the responsibility which attaches to the whole Church for the selection, the preparation, and the presentation of those whom the community itself designs for this service? This is no mere question of appealing to the layman for funds to assist the education of those who apply for ordination to the bishops. It is a great spiritual responsibility which ought to be restored to the whole body of the faithful. Nothing seems plainer from the Scriptures and the earliest records of the Church than the obligation of corporate action which in this as in all matters of spiritual concern rested on the entire community of believers. The idea of a ministry propagating its kind by unchecked co-optation and demanding not a moral deference but a constitutional subjection on the part of the lay people may suit the hierarchic tendencies which from the third century have been developed in Christendom; it is entirely inappropriate to the ideal of a Church which may be gathered from the facts of the New Testament. Nor, if you will reflect on

the proportions of the service in which we are now engaged, will it appear that the bishop is supposed to have chosen, tried, and accepted either by himself or by his deputies the men who are presented before him for the imposition of hands. On the contrary, it is the archdeacon who, according to the rubric introduces the men now to be ordained, himself the poor shrunken representative in our ecclesiastical system of that election of presbyters and deacons which is the proper function of the Christian brotherhood. It is prelacy, not primitive episcopacy, which isolates the bishop from the congregation. Is it too much to say that many of the younger men among us are looking forward to the day when the Church of England, losing nothing of its essential heritage, shall have shaken itself free from those feudal disabilities which still stifle its voice and cramp its powers? Its companion the State has emerged into the articulate fullness of democratic life. Must not the Church also achieve an enfranchisement in which a General Assembly, corresponding to the free Parliament of this realm, shall become the appropriate expression of its corporate determinations? History has thrown upon our bishops a charge and a responsibility which no individual, no, not an angel from heaven, should be called to bear. The bishop is the father of Christ's flock, not the lord over God's heritage. This great work of providing and putting forward those who are to

serve in the sacred ministry should enlist the efforts of the whole Church, of every diocese, nay, of every parish in England. To this task we must bend our energies. Facts are forcing us to the work, which is as yet only begun. Not till the Church of England achieves autonomy will the ideal be fully revived. But when presentation to the chief pastor comes once more to be the last stage in a process of sifting and trial, for which all are responsible, then, and not till then, will the ministry of the Word and sacraments regain its normal relation to the priesthood of the whole Body of Christ. Meanwhile it is the duty of us all, whether we live in country or city, in town or thorp, whether presbyters or laymen, whether men or women, to construct roads, to build bridges, to open gates for the lad of parts, the youth of purpose, the man of the Spirit, whether son of squire or scullion, yeoman or hind, dwelling in hall or homestead, cabin or croft, to don the King's livery in the service of the Church, to set them tried, tested, and approved in Christ, before the seat of the apostles that they may receive the imposition of ordaining hands.

And as for you who this day reach the consummation of your hopes, however rough, however thorny, however steep the track by which you have won hither, it is the last stage in the story of the Seven which has its wonderful message to you—"When they had prayed, they laid their

hands on them." Doubtless you have ere this recognised the good hand of your God upon you. A mother's prayers, a father's hopes, the encouragement of friends, the fixed determination of your own heart, the summons of some vivid experience, some, if not all, of these influences have convinced you that God's predestinating purpose was upon you, yea, before you were conceived in the womb. Or if there is any one among you to whom even at the eleventh hour this conviction is a stranger, there is at least the tremendous fact that you are here and that there is none to say you nay. Nothing but the Divine intervention, sudden and swift, can now stay you from the hands of solemn separation. Before you stretches the cold future, like the bleak moorland road which to the northern traveller, as on a dark December day he mounts the heights above the mills and factories of Halifax or Keighley, looms pitiless, bare, and desolate.

" Penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion."

When you must needs put the stout heart to the stey brae, or perish from the venture, what comfort shall uphold your spirit? Surely it will be the memory of this hour, when He, who counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry, chose you into the succession of His

champions. "When they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

These are days in which men, appealing as they suppose to the bar of history, would fain dismiss the doctrine of Apostolical Succession as a "gigantic figment" (so they phrase it) from the realm of serious study. We of the Church of England hold no brief for any theory, whether of the third, the thirteenth, or the twentieth century, in which men have sought to express, often uncritically enough, what seemed to represent to them a great reality. We reject no ministry even if to us it seems less adequately to express the principles of the Apostolic Church than that which we have ourselves received unbroken from ancient times. It is the glory of this Mother Church of the English folk that it has sheltered beneath its roof a congregation of French Calvinists who found here a freedom to worship God which was long denied them in their native land. We foreclose no historical inquiry about what is still an uncertain problem, the origins of the Christian ministry. In God's good time He will show us all how the ways, which now seem devious, at length shall meet. We dare not anticipate that revelation. And yet, if others claim the witness of the Spirit, we too have our experience. To us this succession, about which men wrangle, is no arrogant claim to trust in ourselves and to despise others. It is the pledge of our calling. By this we know that Thou didst send us. It

needs no effort of recollection, rekindling the embers of a faded enthusiasm, reviving the gladness of an old surrender across the arid desert of the barren years, to allay our doubts and to calm our fears. There lie those letters of orders, sere and dusty it may be with the lapse of time but eloquent of a fact stronger than the heart's best emotions, surer than the mind's clearest memories. Nay, but Thou didst call me, Thou didst call me. Thine own seal is upon me, and Thy promise cannot fail. In sorrow, in disappointment, in failure, I recall the smiling fact of my ordination and feel, as it were, afresh "the waving of the hands that blessed." With melody in my heart and the praises of God in my mouth I will beguile the weary hours until the evening come. Then let them sing my requiem.

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Gladly I lived and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse that you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

THE SACRAMENT OF UNITY

*To the Worshipful Company of Skinners in St. Mary Aldermary
on Corpus Christi Day, 1911.*

“One bread, one body.”

1 CORINTHIANS X. 17.

VIII

THE SACRAMENT OF UNITY

MASTER, Wardens, and Gentlemen of this Worshipful Company, the duty of him to whom you entrust the office of preaching on this occasion is to exhort the Company to unity and to the maintenance of the Free Grammar School at Tonbridge.

It would be needless and almost unbecoming for me to bid you remember your duty in the matter of public education otherwise than in the most formal manner. For my presence in this pulpit to-day is not merely a response to the request with which through your clerk I have been honoured. It is much more than this. To me it is the discharge, a very partial and inadequate discharge, I freely acknowledge, of a debt which I owe to your worshipful society. When in the autumn of 1884 I went up a raw lad from the City of London School to Trinity College in Oxford, I was the holder of a scholarship offered by the Skinners for competition among the scholars of that useful and distinguished institution which flourishes under the ægis

of the Corporation on the Thames Embankment. And if it would not be altogether true to say that but for your liberality the advantages of a university education would not have been open to me, it is yet certain that your liberality enabled me to reap a far wider benefit from those advantages than would otherwise have been possible for the son of a widowed mother whose fortune was not princely.

Time was when it was generally supposed that the days of the ancient municipality of London were all but numbered, and the zeal of reformers was calling upon its guilds and corporations to set their house in order. But old London still survives, unswallowed by the County Council, distinguished by its great tradition from the crowd of modern boroughs that enclose it on every side. And perhaps there is nothing that has more surely contributed to the stability of institutions, dear to you for the memories and associations of centuries, but often regarded, as we are all aware, with no friendly eye by an unimaginative public, than the honourable history of the ancient guilds in the matter of modern education. The City Companies have never been backward in the application of their revenues to the advancement of learning, and among them all none has a finer record than the Worshipful Company of Skinners. To carry coals to Newcastle is proverbially an unprofitable occupation. Nor will a preacher make the best of

his opportunity who shall wax hot and tedious in exhorting you to maintain the Free Grammar School at Tonbridge.

The other subject prescribed to the preacher of your annual sermon is one that can never be out of place. What the experience of the Skinners in regard to the spirit of unity within the circle of their own fellowship may have been I do not know nor do I wish to inquire. But no one can walk round the courtyard of the Royal Exchange with an observant eye and not be reminded of a famous feud which once disturbed the peace of the City, and in which you yourselves were one of the contending parties. For one of the frescoes, which have added a new delight to that cool and refreshing colonnade, represents the reconciliation between the Skinners and the Merchant Taylors in the fifteenth century. The action which consummates the fraternal union of the two great Companies is the natural and significant sacrament which is known as the Loving Cup.

We meet this afternoon on what you call without equivocation or apology the Feast of Corpus Christi. I need hardly remind you that since the days of the Reformation that festival, like All Souls' Day, has ceased to be officially recognised in England. But just as All Souls College in Oxford still celebrates the 2nd of November with a special service in its chapel and a time-honoured banquet in its hall, so you still set apart the Thurs-

day after Trinity Sunday as the day of your election. You, like the Oxford College, have seen no reason to alter your customs. With you continuity weighs more heavily than conformity. And even though your procession lacks those peculiar features which mark the Corpus Christi processions of Southern Europe, the fact remains that you choose this above all other days in the year for proceeding in a stately and formal manner to the House of God. I can well believe that were the Protestant bookseller of Paternoster Row to take you to task for the countenance which your practice might be supposed to give to mediæval superstition, the Company would give short shrift to the objection.

Corpus Christi is, of course, an annual commemoration of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Its celebration does not belong to the primitive days of Christianity but to that Middle Age in which the traditions and customs of the City of London had their birth. Weighty considerations, arising out of the corruptions and abuses with which, as is well known, this sacrament had come to be associated in the period immediately preceding the English Reformation, led to its disuse. It is probable that, as men thought then, it would have been impossible to continue in the reformed Church of England a custom which popular imagination would have insisted on connecting with associations that it was desirable to

break. And I am bound to state my own opinion that a general revival of the observance in our own day would be attended with the danger, by no means imaginary, of re-imposing a tyranny from which this country was happily delivered three centuries ago. But there is hardly any gain that is not accompanied with some loss. And in this case we have undoubtedly lost that witness to the highest of all fellowships—the brotherhood of Christianity, the common life in Jesus Christ of all believers—which a due recognition of the meaning and importance of this holy sacrament is especially calculated to convey. There is small reason to doubt why the observance of the festival of Corpus Christi should have been closely associated, as in the case of this Worshipful Company, with the foundation of guilds and fraternities. The Christian Church has been the fruitful mother of other unities. And from the earliest days, as St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians witnesses, the Supper of the Lord has been alike the seal and the pledge of the common life of the Divine society. For these are the words in which the apostle has expressed the meaning of the sacrament. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread."

Think for a few moments of that Loving Cup which consummated the reconciliation of the two Companies in 1484. It would not be true to say that it was merely a ritualistic symbol of a union already effected by the good offices of my Lord Mayor Billesden, a piece of pageantry that a less picturesque age might well have omitted. Nay, you might as well ask a pair of young lovers to omit the meeting of the lips. These things are sacramental. The fading of old enmities, the disappearance of a rancour that has embittered mutual relations, the kindly mediation which has been slowly reviving an ancient spirit of friendship, the restoration of old memories, the burial of the hatchet—all these things have been preparing the way for the draught of a common cup, which conveys what it signifies, and not only sets the recipients at one, but actually makes them one.

This is why all down the ages the common meal has played a part of paramount importance in the history of mankind. Round-table conferences have always been most effective when there has been something on the board other than blotting-paper and ink. Cold comfort these. Fellowship at table redeems what would otherwise be the satisfaction of a mean, if necessary, appetite, and consecrates it to a public end. To dislike the solitary meal is a mark of the cultured mind, and food eaten in secret has been condemned by at

least one Father of the Christian Church as though it were little better than forbidden fruit. A halo of sanctity has been cast by most peoples, whether savage or civilised, around the hospitable board. Sometimes, as in the Old Testament or the epics of Homer, the common meal has risen to the dignity of a religious sacrifice. Guilds and societies in ancient Rome, no less than in modern Europe, have cemented their unity and realised their life by its means. City dinners may provoke the sarcasm of the ignorant, but I can imagine none more ready to guard them from profanation than the enlightened freeman of his craft. If indeed a Gorgias Midas ever existed outside the prolific fancy of a Du Maurier, no one who was jealous for the honour of his trade but would express his indignation in language borrowed from St. Paul: "What? Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye that honourable mystery into which ye have been called and shame those that have none?" In intention, if not always in fact, the common meal restrains appetite with the curb of a public purpose. At such a gathering excess wears something of the aspect of sacrilege.

Only last Monday I was present at the yearly gathering of the members of my Oxford college. Once again we met in the old hall, renewing the friendships of the past, thinking of the reverend dead, living once again through the sunlit days

when "that fair city with its dreaming towers" first cast its mystic spell upon our opening youth ; and as we stood in silence to honour the pious memory of our founder who sleeps beneath the chapel pavement, the common life, I had almost said the personality, of our beloved fellowship seemed as though it were revealed to us once again in the breaking of bread. And that, I think, must be the experience of the Skinners as they assemble year by year at Dowgate Hill on Corpus Christi Day.

These great human facts ought surely to lead us to a due recognition of the place which the sacrament of Holy Communion holds in the fellowship of the disciples of Jesus. There is something strangely narrow and unintelligent in the view of this simple yet majestic rite which sees in it nothing but an act of obedience to the unexplained will of the Saviour. God forbid that any one should seem to speak lightly of the soldier's unquestioning compliance with the orders which he has received from his superior officer. We honour the heroes of Balaclava, even though they knew that some one had blundered.

" Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."

But after all the analogy of the soldier is wholly inadequate to represent those whom the Master Himself has called His friends. The friend is no

mere servant who "knoweth not what his Lord doeth." If in the sacrament Christ instituted a mystery, He nevertheless established a rite illuminated for us who are His friends alike by the principles of the society which He founded and by the common experience of ordinary life.

In the midst of the highly developed civilisation of the Roman Empire to which, as I have said, guilds and corporations were as familiar as they were to those who set on foot the trade fellowships and companies of the Middle Age, Christianity appeared as a network of fraternities in every city and town. It was this strange federation of societies, which, though existing in this world, owned an allegiance independent of Cæsar, that at first perplexed the mind and ultimately provoked the interference of the Imperial Government. And the bond of union between the members of this universal association, which to the eye of the secular State was a dangerous *imperium in imperio*, was not only the possession of a common faith (that would have passed unheeded by the Roman statesman) but the celebration of a common meal. Christianity was a spirit brought into the region of the concrete and actual by means of a sacrament. "See how these Christians love one another" became a matter of practical politics when it was discovered to be no mere amiable sentiment but an embodied fact. The table of the Lord was for the early Christians

the epitome, the expression, nay, in a true and living sense, the source of the Christian life. To the historical student it is not extraordinary that this sacred rite should have been exaggerated and distorted out of its due proportion in the life and thought of the Christian society, just as it is not astonishing that the subsequent reaction against superstition should in its turn have obscured its Divine glory and its spiritual power. But of one thing we may be certain, that a Christianity which is not sacramental, which does not give its due prominence to the Supper of the Lord, in the economy of the Household of Faith, has lost touch with the broad human principles upon which the work of our Lord Jesus Christ securely rests, and which marked the society of His followers in the joyous morning of its chequered story.

For the Eucharist is the Christian's act of fellowship, whereby he renews his contact with the brotherhood which shares what the Scripture calls the common salvation. What more expressive of Christian faith than those bands of worshippers which met in the Catacombs of St. Callixtus to realise their unity as the flock of the Good Shepherd by sharing the bread of heaven in the days of persecution? What more eloquent than the scene which might have been witnessed at an early hour yesterday morning, in the choir of St. Paul's, when a body of some hundred and

sixty men sang their hymns to Christ as God, and bound themselves anew to His service in the power of a common reception of the sacrament of His love? There is so much in the Holy Communion that is beyond controversy for all sincere believers, as to make it above all things deplorable that the contentions of the schools should have caused any humble follower of Christ to be a stranger to its surpassing power of consecrating human life, sweetening human relations, and perfecting the fellowship of the saints.

No one can well mistake the significance of a loaf in which many share, of a cup of which many partake. It makes the many one. Men will probably always differ as to much of what our Lord may or may not have meant when He said, "This is My body." Let us not exagitate such questions as promote division. But who that has any power of realising the significance of outward actions and of the intimate relation which they bear to inward realities can for a moment doubt that when, on the very night when He delivered Himself up for the sins of the whole world, the Lord gathered His chosen Twelve around Him and bade them share His own bread and drink of His own cup, He was welding into one body with Himself the folk that believed in Him? By an intimate, personal, and living tie He made them partakers of His Spirit, His sacrifice, and His pain. And if, as is plain

from the continuous witness of Church history, no less than from the pages of the New Testament itself, that sacred rite was intended, not merely for those who first shared it, but for all who through their word should believe in the Name of Jesus, can we be wrong if we find focussed in its celebration all the great promises of God which in Christ are Yea and in Christ are Amen? Here we find fellowship one with another, not in those privileges which are ours as citizens of London or as members of our craft, but in the forgiveness which Jesus purchased for all men upon the cross, in the life which flows to all believers from His stricken side, in the Spirit which knits into one communion and fellowship the whole body of the saints.

The Lord's Supper is the Sacrament of Unity. It is at once the seal of a spiritual union already achieved and the pledge of a unity yet to be experienced. Where separations have existed we must beware of inviting each other to share in it with a zeal that outruns discretion. It is no charm to force the unwilling hearts of men. Lord Mayor Billesden would have retarded the reunion of Skinners and Merchant Taylors had he supposed that the Loving Cup would in itself have reconciled the contending Companies before they were prepared to share it with a ready mind. Sacraments cannot make men one in their approach to the Father till the middle wall of

partition has been broken down by a strong faith in a reconciling Christ. But when once the barrier of opposing wills has been removed there is no higher safeguard of the unity of the Spirit than that bond of Divine Peace which fellowship in this heavenly Feast affords. Many influences, not least among them the failure to maintain a living relation between the act of participation and the realisation of a Divine Presence in the practice of the mediæval Church, have robbed the communion of that part which it ought to play in all the corporate activities of Christian men. But is it too much to hope that the day may come when it will again be possible to hallow such commemorations as that in which you are this day engaged with the celebration of that sacrament which it was the intention of Corpus Christi Day to honour? Be that as God pleases. Meanwhile let me close this sermon with the words of the old Latin hymn, which it may well be that our fathers sang in St. Mary Aldermary in the days when the Skinners' Company was young, and which will surely find an echo in the heart of many a modern man whose views of religious truth are very different from theirs:—

“ Very Bread, Good Shepherd, tend us ;
Jesu, of Thy love befriend us :
Thou refresh us, Thou defend us,
Thine eternal goodness send us
In the land of life to see :

Thou who all things canst and knowest,
Who on earth such Food bestowest,
Grant us with Thy Saints, though lowest,
Where the heavenly Feast Thou showest,
Fellow heirs and guests to be."

D.—THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
THE RATIONALITY OF PRAYER

In St. Paul's Cathedral on Rogation Sunday, 1911.

" If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ? "

ST. LUKE xi. 13.

IX

THE RATIONALITY OF PRAYER

ROGATION Sunday is the alternative name for the last Sunday in the Easter season. The old English custom of singing litanies in procession on the three days which immediately followed it as an act of intercession for the fruits of the earth is still, I believe, represented in some parishes by the practice of beating the bounds. This ancient observance, no less than the Feast of the Ascension, to which it was the introduction, brings before us the subject of prayer, not so much in the larger sense in which it covers every exercise and expression of our communion with God, but in that narrower and more familiar acceptance of the term which is suggested by the words of the Gospel, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name. Ask, and ye shall receive."

This, then, is the subject to which I desire to invite your attention this afternoon. There is, perhaps, none which raises so many perplexities in the minds of men as this universal duty of religion. Some people think that a knowledge of the laws

which govern the sequence of events is fatal to prayer. Others believe that the sphere of its operation must be restricted to those inward motions of the spiritual life which are apparently independent of the natural processes according to which the earth yields its harvest and day follows night. Others, again, appeal to that plurality of causes which makes it difficult to affirm that because certain results have in fact succeeded to their petitions, these results are a direct effect and not an accidental sequence. "Show me," cried the visitor in Poseidon's temple, when the priest pointed to the votive offerings of those who had been delivered from shipwreck, "show me the memorials of those that have been drowned." And a far larger class is probably composed of those who, taught some simple form of prayer in infancy, and repeating it with more or less regularity for many years, have at last asked themselves the question whether this conventional habit of early piety had any genuine touch with reality or any sort of correspondence with the actualities of daily experience.

To all such questionings it might seem to be a sufficient answer if we were to plead the universality of the instinct which drives men to their knees. Religion in all its bearings is one of those elemental forces which defies reason. Worship is impervious to argument. No wise man will bend his energies to its destruction, but, recognising

the instinct of devotion as a fundamental attribute of our humanity, will seek to turn it into channels which subserve the highest interests of the race. But we are after all rational beings, and the danger of superstition, which always waits upon the exercise of religion, will not suffer us to be content with the encouragement of any practice merely because it seems to satisfy the longings of the human breast. It is a real peril against which we must be on guard in that reconstruction of religious thought which has already begun, and which will be a characteristic feature of the coming age. Intercession for the living, prayers for the dead, invocation of Saints, the veneration of the Virgin, the cult of the Bona Dea, the séance of the spiritualist, the prayer-wheel of Tibet, the contemplation of the Buddhist, the mysteries of Mithra, even the darker forms of pagan sacrifice—each one of this motley collection of religious practices is capable of justification on the ground of its appeal to a fundamental human instinct. The other day I chanced to fall into conversation with a colonial statesman, who had given some attention to the ethnic customs and beliefs of the aboriginal people with whom he had been brought in contact, and who was inclined to maintain the somewhat startling paradox that, while reason is an agent of destruction, the unreasoning play of the elemental affections is the true secret of the world's advance. But while we may

admit, as the comparative study of the human race abundantly teaches, that the spirit of man is infinitely larger than his intelligence, we shall degrade our whole conception of worship unless we are prepared to purify the blind homage of the unregenerate man until it becomes the rational service of the Christian. "When ye pray," are our Lord's words, "use not vain repetitions as the heathen do."

There are few subjects about which our Lord spoke more often and more practically than the subject of prayer. Would that we could gain more of the simplicity of His attitude towards it! And first of all He reminds us that the man who prays is only applying to the sphere of his fellowship with God the principles which obtain in the ordinary intercourse of daily life. The dictates of common sense suggest that he should ask if he wishes to receive. The bell at your front door, the forms of application issued by the thousand from every office which has favours to distribute, the advertising columns of the daily press witness to the important place which asking holds in the development of human lives and in the conduct of human affairs. How foolish would be the person who should plead a rigid theory of determinism as an excuse for waiting until something should turn up. How many doors remain closed because those who are free to enter are too shy to knock! How many opportunities are lost because those for

whom they are waiting are too lazy to seek! How many boons are never granted because those for whom they are intended have not courage to ask! Bread will not fall into our mouths. Work will not drop from the skies. It may be true enough that the labour exchange is not the final remedy for want of employment. But our method of dealing with the man who will not put down his name should be short and sharp. It is the ordinary experience of life to which our Lord appeals when He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you." "Every one that asketh receiveth" is a universal proposition. It is not alone in answers to prayer that it proves itself true. To ask is the way to get. To seek is the way to find. Knock, if you would enter by the open door. The common sense of mankind approves the statement. And though many litigants have found their appeals to the law less successful in their issue than the importunate widow in her wearisome demands upon the unjust and obdurate judge, it nevertheless remains true as a maxim of practical conduct that the gifts of human fellowship are only assured to those who are not too proud to ask. Nor because times out of number, it may be, we have encountered either the unwillingness or the inability of friend or patron to grant our petitions are we therefore less satisfied of the important part that asking must always take among the causes which are at work in directing the destinies of men.

And it is this principle that the man of faith carries with him into his spiritual life. What others have tried and tested in the daily play of human intercourse he has found good also in that larger world in which the soul holds communion with the Eternal. Too often has he proved its prevailing efficacy to mistake the silence of God for a rebuke to his persistent petitions, or for an evidence of an ear that hears not, of an arm that cannot save. It is not presumption, it is trust that prays.

This brings us to the second point in the teaching of Christ. It is to our Heavenly Father that prayers are addressed. The manifestation of God which the Bible records is the revelation not of arbitrary omnipotence but of loving personality. As I read the Scriptures, the Being whom to know is life eternal is no God from a machine, extraneous to the order of the universe, whose leading attribute is the power of doing anything He pleases, but the soul, the life, the pulse of this mysterious universe. I have no wish to transfer Ben Nevis to the Atlantic Ocean. It is only a dull imagination that can interpret our Saviour's words about the faith that removes mountains in a sense so destitute alike of true poetry and of genuine power. I am no mathematician, but I doubt whether even a Senior Wrangler has much enthusiasm for infinity. It may be true that the undisciplined or indolent mind finds comfort in the

thought of a benevolent Omnipotence which, to use Matthew Arnold's celebrated phrase, can turn a pen into a penwiper. But of this we may be certain, that for serious thought such speculations have no significance. The cry of suffering humanity is expressed in the wistful challenge of St. Philip, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And the response of Eternal Love is the assurance of a Personal Being whose presence overshadows the homeless lives of men. "Be of good cheer: it is I: be not afraid." "O heart I made, a heart beats here."

The relation of such a Being as this to universal law is something entirely different from the arbitrary control which is assumed to belong to the God Almighty of popular fancy, who has become the sport of all who venerate another divinity, as little congenial to accurate thought, the ironbound system of Nature. Personality, like prayer, is a force of which we have daily and hourly experience in the affairs of ordinary life. Let me illustrate my meaning by a simple example. The south-eastern district of Lancashire became, as is well known, the seat of the great cotton industry because it was one of the few parts of England in which the atmospheric conditions made it possible to work up this natural product into the familiar fabrics of commerce. The rainfall of that region, which is a source of continual complaint to those who live in it, has been the cause of its wealth, for

cotton will break in the working if the air is not damp. But to-day so far have we advanced in knowledge and invention that the manufacturer can make himself independent of the variations of climate by raising the atmosphere of his mill to the point of humidity required for weaving. It is in this way that human personality is on every hand adapting, modifying, selecting the conditions under which it acts, and Nature is conquered by obeying it. So is it, I conceive, that those spiritual beings, whether good or evil, which rise above the race of men in the hierarchy of personal life live and move and operate. And the great Father, whose robe Nature is, is surely no irresponsible Sultan but Himself as one under authority when He makes the winds His messengers, His ministers the flames of fire. It is told of Thomas Chalmers, than whom in the first half of the last century these islands could show few more massive in intellect or more brilliant in speech, that he was seen on the last morning of his life wandering among the flowers in the garden of a Scottish manse, as he murmured the words, "My heavenly Father, my heavenly Father." What nobler attitude towards the universe could you desire than that? I ask for no God who would deflect from its orbit a single star, or violate the laws which govern the growth of the meanest flower. I ask for no God who has no reverence for the way of the wind, or for those hidden processes whereby

the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. But in the evening and morning and at noonday will I pray out of the deep of my own personality to Him who maketh the seven stars and Orion, and who is the God of my life, knowing that He will cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him, and that He will hear my voice.

But if the analogy of human experience and the revelation of the Fatherhood of God are a groundwork upon which the practice of prayer may securely rest, the coping-stone of the Christian position is the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the Holy Spirit. There is a constant and intimate connection between prayer and the Lord and Life-giver, who is at once its dynamic and its response. In the apostolic injunctions, "Quench not the Spirit" is closely associated with "Pray without ceasing." And the Gospel read in our ears this morning comes from those discourses of the Master, the burden of which is the mission of the Comforter. And it is none other than the Spirit Himself who is present to the mind of Jesus Christ when He first teaches His disciples to pray. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit?"

Now there may be those among this audience who will at once say that the scope of prayer, far

from being extended by our Lord's word so as to include every good and every perfect gift, is in fact limited to that narrow circle of human experience which is covered by moral conduct and spiritual character. We, who had thought it the privilege of a believer to make known to God by prayer and supplication every desire and want of his manifold nature, are now bidden to limit our petitions to those inward gifts and graces which are the ornaments of the Christian life. Sons of an earthly parent may beg a loaf nor expect a stone, but the sons of the Heavenly Father, to whom it belongs not to make stones bread, may not, save in a figurative and spiritual sense, say, "Give us this day our daily bread." Seedtime and harvest, rain and sunshine, the wind and the waves are beyond the power of our prayers. Never again must we chant in our processions "From plague, pestilence, and famine, good Lord deliver us." Let us confine our petitions to the new heart, to the humble and contrite spirit.

Those who would argue thus are interpreting the gift of God by the narrow experience of a small suburban existence, not by the witness of the New Testament and the testimony of the universal Church. Brothers and sisters in Christ, the arm of the Lord is not shortened. It is in ourselves that we are straitened, our feeble faith, our low expectancies, our timid refusals. We shrink from that trembling of the earth, from that baptism, not of

water only, but of fire through which the living God brings His people forth into a wealthy place, when He fills the Church with Pentecostal power. Read the Acts of the Apostles, read the Epistles of St. Paul, read the Apocalypse of St. John, and you will find that the gift of the Holy Spirit, of which the Lord speaks as the answer to believing prayer, has entered into the life of the world, however little you may yourself have felt the power, as a boundless possibility of blessing. Look at the lame man leaping and walking at the Beautiful Gate, where hitherto he had crouched for alms. Listen to the company of Christians at Jerusalem uplifting their voice with one accord to the Lord of heaven and earth, as they pray that signs of healing power may be wrought in the name of His Servant Jesus, and feel the shaking of the place where they are gathered. No one can read the New Testament with any appreciation of its real meaning who does not recognise that the Spirit is a great liberating power that seizes all the faculties of body and soul and makes them its own. To be baptized into this Spirit is to be given a share in the life of God Himself, to be put into direct and personal touch with all the great forces that control the universe, and to know by a living and actual experience the victory that overcomes the world. The Spirit is the finger by which God creates. Prayer no longer presents any difficulty to those who are living in the Spirit, and with

whom the voice of supplication is deep calling unto deep within the Eternal Mind. And those words which have been appended by an unknown hand to the torn page of the Gospel according to St. Mark—"In My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover"—are eloquent in their witness to the experience of men and women who have claimed the fulfilment of the Lord's declaration that the Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask. It has been so once. It has been so more than once. Why may it not be again, O ye of narrow faith! "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

In Manchester Cathedral on Sunday, August 14, 1910.

"A remnant according to the election of grace."

ROMANS XI. 5.

X

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

THE argument of the three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, the reading of which we conclude this morning, is one of the most difficult of the Bible. It suggests problems concerning the moral government of God which perplex, if they do not appal, the mind which entertains them. We do not, for example, like to be reminded that the Book of Exodus speaks of God as hardening Pharaoh's heart. We shrink from the language of St. Paul when he speaks of human beings as "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." Election is a word the associations of which in theology are forbidding and sinister. A superficial study of these chapters suggests to the uncritical mind that the apostle was somewhat hasty with his emphatic and indignant "God forbid" when he was met with the objection, "Is there then [that is, according to your theory of salvation] unrighteousness with God?"

There is, perhaps, no subject upon which there is more need to bestow patient and attentive con-

sideration than the great mystery of the ways of God with men. Yet there are few subjects upon which those to whom religion has never been the primary interest in life or in thought will more readily utter untested opinions in the railway carriage or in the billiard-room. They resent the dogmatism of the clergy, not, as I will freely confess, entirely without reason. With regard to their own unqualified and confident assertions they do not suspect that perhaps after all they may be wrong. I should myself hesitate to make pronouncements on the cotton-market because I had been in Manchester, but I have heard a Major of Dragoons declare his disbelief in missions on the somewhat insufficient ground that he had been in India. So ladies and gentlemen, puffing, it may be, at a cigarette, will disestablish the devil, or abolish the punishment of sin, or explode the doctrine of the Atonement, as though the final issues of human destiny were as simple as the alphabet. To the laden conscience the Christian minister should always be ready to proclaim the secret of his own faith—that the gift of God is eternal life. But I am far too profoundly aware of the limitations of my own intelligence to seek to dispose of so weighty a matter as the predestinating purpose of the Eternal in a casual conversation at the street corner.

Now it was just one of those deep problems that confronted the mind of St. Paul when he had sur-

rendered to the victorious Christ and had been received into the fellowship of His disciples in the Straight Street at Damascus. Never for a moment did he waver in his allegiance to the exalted Nazarene, or doubt the reality of the vision, to which from the first he had not been disobedient. But the blinding of his natural sight in the early hours of his new and startling experience was typical of that readjustment of focus which the strange and marvellous fact thrust thus unexpectedly into his spiritual consciousness demanded of the exclusive Pharisee when he found himself called to be a universal missionary to the nations. He had now to meet the prejudice which hitherto he had shared. If Jesus, with His subversive claim, were indeed the Messiah, as by his conviction no less than by his allegiance he was now bound to declare Him, why this obstinate rejection on the part of Israel itself? This is a problem which must present itself under various aspects in every age to the followers of the Crucified, when they are brought face to face, as we are in Manchester to-day, with the stubborn, persistent fact of the Hebrew race, which, thrusting itself into our commerce, our government, our social life, yet maintains the identity of its exclusive customs, its worship of the God of Abraham, its obstinate refusal of the Cross of Christ. No one can ignore the Hebrew people. No one can deny to them a zeal of God which puts many Christians to shame,

a genius for religion which makes it the crowning characteristic of the race. No attitude towards them is more unworthy of the philosopher or the historian than that antipathy which is the sad inheritance of centuries nominally Christian, and with which the Gentile has abundantly repaid the proud superiority of the Jew. There they are, a unique fact in the story of the world and in the economy of the modern State. And for St. Paul, their bitter hostility against the crucified Nazarene, whom he himself had learned to acknowledge as God blessed for ever, raised a peculiarly painful and agonising question. He was himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews. No personal enmity or private quarrel had separated him from the people whom he loved, and whose welfare was the cherished desire of his heart. If the patience of the martyred Stephen had disturbed the assured complacency of the young man at whose feet the clothes of the witnesses were laid, he had silenced his doubts and pursued his energetic course undismayed till the moment of his sudden and unexpected change. The call of the blood, the pieties of home, the convictions which a long and laborious study of the ancient Scriptures had fixed in a peculiarly acute and penetrating intelligence, the close friendships of twenty, thirty, or even forty years, the associations of a vigorous manhood spent, freely and absolutely given, in the service of the sacred nation—all these forces

had combined to form in his ardent and capacious soul so passionate a longing for his fellow-countrymen that, whether as Saul the Pharisee or Paul the Apostle, he could cry with a sincerity that left no room for doubt, no place for cavil, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they may be saved." And yet it was this very man who was never tired of reiterating his conviction that between Jew and Greek there was before God no difference, who was ready, as the event proved, to seal with his own blood his apostleship to the nations, and who passed the Rubicon of separation when he shook off the dust of his feet in the synagogue at Antioch, and exclaimed, "Seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles." But not only is there none of the antipathy, the active opposition, the uncompromising hostility which too often marks the character of the man to whose change of faith we give the unpleasing name of perversion. The loving humility of the Christian does but intensify the loyal patriotism of the Jew. For the sake of his kinsmen he could even wish, if this were possible, that his own name might be blotted from the Book of Life. And to the question, "Hath God cast away His people?" his answer is: "God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

If we are to understand the argument by which St. Paul vindicates the righteousness of God in His

dealings with the chosen people, we must first of all be in sympathy with his spiritual apprehension of the power and love of Christ. Those whose faith is an inherited tradition rather than a living experience may well rise from the problems of the world's religious beliefs in the spirit of intellectual scepticism. God's purpose of love must first of all meet you, my brother, in the practical issues of your personal life before you can discuss its methods and its mystery in relation to the universal history of mankind. By the very limitations of your human destiny which involve you in the responsibilities for which God calls you to account, the sins for which Christ atones, the guilt from which the Cross redeems, you are precluded from occupying the position of the impartial critic of the relations between God and His world. St. Paul only began to write the ninth chapter of the Romans when he had finished the wonderful eighth. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Only when he had received the assurance for himself that to them that are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation did the message of redemptive love for the world shed the light of its benediction over the tangled story of the painful earth. It was the conditions under which he had himself found mercy that enabled him to interpret the mystery of the Father's will, the gracious purpose to sum up all things in Christ. While you

feel the weight of your own sad failures, the mockery of your high ideals, the misery of an alienated life, you will not stay to analyse your need, to move nice questions concerning the origin of sin or the common heritage of guilt, or the inequalities of the Divine dealing. But, like St. Paul, you will cry aloud to the God who made you, "Who shall deliver me?" till, in the words of Bunyan's Pilgrim, as he flees from the City of Destruction, you are able to exclaim, "I saw One, as I thought in my mind, hang bleeding upon the tree, and the very sight of Him made my burden fall off my back." Christ did not ask St. Paul, nor does He ask you, to settle all the propositions of an intricate theology before He extends the gracious invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labour . . . I will give you rest." He proposes to the faith of children an experiment which has opened new worlds to wondering eyes, a joyful peace to troubled hearts, and power to weary spirits. Now the man who has felt God's mighty grip of his own life through the power of a reconciling Christ has learned that God's final purpose for the world is a purpose not only of love, but of redeeming love. He is convinced out of the fullness of his own experience that to every one that believeth the same gospel which has delivered him is the power of God unto salvation, and that the glad tidings may not be withheld by the swift feet of the messenger from a single human soul. Then he

can afford to trust God on the vast field of human history, to accomplish His sovereign will by methods that are wider than the measure of his own mind. Sure of the ultimate purpose, he can leave the narrower designs, the more immediate purposes, in the hands of that paternal forethought which is master of its own methods, and can approach its ends by ways of which God alone is judge. He can trace the Divine presence in history. He can see the footprints of the Eternal will in the records of the past. Look, for instance, at the decisive instance of the Pharaoh which stands in bold relief upon the venerable page of Exodus, and which again and again has shocked the sensitive imagination of Christians as it is surveyed by St. Paul in this Epistle to the Romans. "For this cause"—he cites the very words of the ancient Scripture—"have I raised thee up that I might show in thee My power." It is not the lone and trembling ghost that passed from the whelming waters of the Red Sea, to be tried in the scales of the inexorable Justice, of which the apostle speaks. It is the magnificent representative of a mighty dynasty, whose haughty lineaments, sculptured in imperishable stone, witness to the power of Him who turns the fierceness of men to His praise. So also the rejection of God's ancient people is itself luminously explained by the apostle, as evidence not of the caprice, still less of the impotence, of a faithless Creator, but of those

unfailing methods which in every age have marked the progress of God's universal purpose of redemption.

And first there is the Divine method of selection. God works "according to election." God is choosing every day, every hour, every moment. Two men are in one bed; two women grinding at the mill; one is taken, the other left. Great qualities manifest themselves in some leader of the national life. We pay a clumsy homage to the principle of selection when we place a coronet on the head of the eldest son. But primogeniture is a human convention, not a fact of the eternal order. It may be that to-day the representative of that distinguished ancestor sits, "the tenth transmitter of a foolish face," on a back bench of the Legislature, while the strain of greatness has reappeared in some distant scion of the noble house. And it is this selective method of Divine working which St. Paul sees in the ancient history of Israel. God never gives away the mode in which He will be true to His own promises. He is able of the very stones to raise up children to Abraham. That is what he means when he compares the story of Jacob and Esau. Children of one birth—surely they, at least, might claim an equal share in the blessing of Abraham. But, even when St. Paul wrote, the facts of history were irrefragable. And to-day the Bedouin scours the

barren sand, the hand of the Israelite is on the forces which move the world. We are always telling our Lord God how He must fulfil His Word, and He is always disappointing our faithless and unfounded claim. We would fain foist our own purposes, our own organisations, our own institutions upon the scheme which has been before the Eternal Mind from the foundation of the world. Again and again we are forced to learn the hard lesson that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. God loves the world. We know it because Christ has died. Why not trust the fulfilment of the unchanging promise to Him who gave it? Let the event prove that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. From us God asks but for faith, obedience, and responsive love. "They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

The second principle of Divine action upon which St. Paul insists is the old prophetic teaching of the remnant. This again is universal in its application. The infallibility of majorities is no more a fact of the eternal order than the Divine right of kings. If Cæsar is not Divine, neither is the voice of the people the voice of God. Who shall say that the destinies of the British race are bound up with the integrity of the Empire? They may rest with the colonists

of Jamaica. There are times when Athanasius stands against the world and the hand of God is with Athanasius. This, too, was illustrated not once nor twice in the experience of the very people for whom it was now claimed that their unbelief should be the measure of God's purpose, that because, to use St. Paul's phrase, they had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, it was not eternal life that was offered in Jesus as Messiah. That Judah was not Israel was a fact which the prophets of the Old Testament never allowed themselves to forget. Our modern inaccuracy knows no distinction. But the Jews were themselves a remnant. The greater part of the Hebrew people were carried away by the victorious Assyrian to the cities of the Medes. Where are they now? It was a remnant of a remnant that returned from the Babylonian exile to rebuild the Temple and the city of their fathers. The rest, at the time when St. Paul wrote, were known as "the dispersed among the Gentiles." God works by the remnant. It is sometimes stronger than even a prophet, in face of the hostility of an obvious, strong, and organised majority, can bring himself to believe. There on Horeb sits the broken and despairing man, who had been very jealous for the Lord of Hosts. "I, I only am left," is his bitter cry, "and they seek my life." Then came the disclosure of Him who, watching over

Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps—"I have left for myself seven thousand men that have not bowed the knee to Baal." There was the promise of the future, there the witness to the unchangeable purpose, there the Israel of God's choice. And, says St. Paul, so it is now. "There is a remnant according to the election of grace." Do you doubt it? The Christian Church was no congregation of anti-Semites, who sought to transfer to themselves and to interpret, in what they chose to call a spiritual sense, the covenant and promise that God had made to a thousand generations of Abraham's believing sons. No. Every stone of the edifice was Hebrew. Its foundations were laid deep in the traditions of the past. The root, the firstfruits of God's bread, to use the expressive figures of the apostle—these are Hebrew. So then is the lump, the tree. This is not the devout imagining of a mind that would fain see in its new allegiance some consistency with the old. A critical investigation of the contents of Christianity, an impartial view of the origins of the Church, reveal its character, not as a protest against the Hebrew polity, but as a true and legitimate expansion of the commonwealth of Israel. And what would Christianity have been without that spiritual genius which passed with the faithful remnant across the breach which Christ had made in the middle wall of partition which separated

the Gentile from the household of God? A shallow estimate of missionary effort as a narrow commercial enterprise is content to measure values in the kingdom of God by repeating the unworthy statement that it costs £2,000 to convert a Jew. Two thousand pounds! Why, it cost a miracle to convert St. Paul, but the work was cheap at the price. Millions have had reason to give thanks for the "remnant according to the election of grace." That remnant is the promise of the future which St. Paul himself greeted from afar. "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead!"

And lastly, the act by which God redeems is an act of grace. The power of the Cross, its immense claim on the adoring gratitude of the children of men is the wonder of the free favour of a loving Father which is there displayed. "Not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us." When Jesus died on Calvary the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man appeared. There are, there must be, many problems which those who know that "the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind" will be content to leave in the hands of a love that passes knowledge. What of Pharaoh in that sequestered state to which he passed from

his fruitless but obstinate defiance of the Divine Will? What of him of whom the compassionate Saviour Himself said, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born"? What of the millions who have lived and died without God, and therefore without hope in the world? There is but one answer, "God is Love." But the life, the power, the service of those whom He gathers into His kingdom depends upon their acceptance of the adoption of sons as the spontaneous favour of a boundless love. The Shepherd sought His sheep. No claim had I on redeeming grace any more than on that first breath which gave me being. But in that act of humble surrender by which Saul the Pharisee recognised the purpose, anticipating every conscious action of his will, which had separated him even from his mother's womb, and in God's own time had called him by His grace, lay the secret of the dedicated life of Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, love answering to love, deep calling unto deep:—

“ O Love, who ere life's earliest dawn
On me Thy choice hast gently laid,
O Love, who here as man wast born
And wholly like to us wast made,
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.”

LEANNESS OF SOUL AND THE BREAD
OF LIFE

In Manchester Cathedral on Sunday, January 15, 1911.

“He gave them their own desire.”

PSALM lxxviii. 30 (P.B.V.).

XI

LEANNESS OF SOUL AND THE BREAD OF LIFE

IT was those quails. You remember the story. The people had been the subjects of a great experience. They had been delivered from bondage. By a mighty arm they had crossed the sea. They had been led in the daytime by a cloud, and all the night through with a light of fire. For them the flintstone had become a springing well. Their meat was the bread of angels. But they despised God's table. Their minds ran on the toothsome tariff of the refreshment-rooms in Egypt—the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. “Our soul loatheth this light food.” So, as we sang in the Psalm, “He gave them their own desire; they were not disappointed of their lust.” There is a sad irony in the picture of this wonderful nation moving onward towards a tremendous destiny, and its members murmuring the while because they were not allowed to make the journey in first-class carriages. But it is only an epitome of the human story with its Divine purpose and its tragedies of lost

souls. "Many that fare deliciously every day," says old Matthew Henry, "and whose bodies are healthful and fat, have, at the same time, leanness in their souls; * no love to God, no thankfulness, no appetite to the bread of life and then the soul must needs be lean. Those wretchedly forget themselves that feast their bodies and starve their souls."

Now I can well believe that some of you are already saying that this is the conventional talk of a Christian minister, who is of course bound to assume that, if men have bodies to nourish, they have also souls to save. The man of the present day may have wistful anticipations of a life beyond these halls in which we feast, these garrets in which we starve. He may wish that he had more certain evidence than the reports of psychical research concerning those dim chambers in which, as is supposed, wander the unsubstantial dead. But from such uncertain speculations we must return to the earth our habitation, this world of clear outline and solid reality, from surmise to certainty, from what we suspect to what we know. If there is a portion of my being which is to survive the shock of death, and to carry into unimagined realms of existence the results of a brief passage through mortality, then indeed the words of Jesus are of paramount significance for human destiny, and it shall profit a man less than nothing if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul. But, O

* Cf. Psa. cvi. 15.

you pulpiteer, you preacher of pious platitudes, you retailer of a conventional theology, what I want to know is whether, lean or fat, I have a soul at all? You with your moderate desires, and your comfortable stipend, and with what the insurance offices call a good life, exhort me with my strong passions, my adventurous temper, my eager spirit of inquiry, to beware lest I imperil my unexchangeable soul. Are you not something like those Pecksniffs of Charity Organisation who, knowing nothing by experience of the precarious fortunes of the poor, recommend what may too often mean a stint of life and of love in thrifty provision for a retirement that may never be reached and an old age that may never be won?

Now I would answer, in the first place, that the modern young man is very fond of suspending in the air a number of unanswered questions, as one puffs rings from a cigarette, a practice which soon becomes fatal to sane, practical life. To him I would say, "Have the goodness to believe that in some things your grandfather might have been right, and get back to business." And, secondly, those who thus argue are confusing two things that are entirely different. One is the question whether I have a soul, and the other is the problem whether that soul is immortal. It will be time enough, my friend, for you to consider how long your soul is likely to last out when you have recognised that the existence of the soul is a simple fact of experience.

When Jesus asks the great question, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" the answer must be given out of your own heart according to the light of your own experience. Read the question as it is translated in the Revised Version and you will see that the appeal is one which can be made directly to every man, however ignorant he may be of the origin and the essential nature of his personality. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his life? What shall a man give in exchange for his life?" There are no metaphysical assumptions here. It is a question that goes straight home to the experience of every one of us. Our Lord is moving among the same circle of ideas as when He says, "Is not the life more than meat?" Human life, He means, is the absolute standard in relation to which all material things are measured. Life itself has no exchange value, because it is by usefulness in promoting life that all worth is appraised. And the satisfaction that we derive from the possession of what is called wealth must be conditioned by the capacity of these things to promote or to retard well-being. No mistake is greater, as Bishop Butler points out, than to attempt to express happiness in terms of property, as though possession were in itself a sure guarantee of joy. A cargo of snowshoes in a tropical climate, a kingdom to a stricken monarch who cries but for a horse to bear him from the battle, a wardrobe of

costly dresses to a dying queen—such things are a mockery of wealth. It is your life which matters. That proposition only requires to be understood to win immediate assent. What a commentary on the conventional standards, by which we disguise realities, is contained in the familiar phrase, "He died worth a hundred thousand pounds"! You may have very rudimentary ideas of all that life involves, of the meaning of that human soul which, nevertheless, is to yourself a priceless jewel, but you will be in no real uncertainty as to the answer which must be returned to the question, What shall a man give in exchange for it? It is to some extent a sufficient account of that leanness of soul which in the case of the Israelites followed upon the surfeit of quails to liken it to those unhappy consequences which crowd the pump-rooms of Harrogate or Homburg with the victims of their own intemperance. But in any case it is the life that is injured, and it is in proportion as experience teaches us more of the meaning of human life, of that world of inward thought, emotion, affections, and will which constitute the personalities of men, that the full bearing of the Psalmist's words upon the apparent success, the deep underlying failure of multitudes of prosperous but purposeless careers is laid bare—"He gave them their own desire."

That word which the Bible uses for the soul, and which is sometimes represented in English by the

alternative "life," is the same which reappears in the name of a study, daily becoming more familiar to men of average education—the science of psychology. This is the science that treats of the inward frame of things which manifests itself in your mind and in mine. What, we ask, are the laws, not of the outward universe, the things which I see and hear and touch, the world of moving phenomena which make up the changeful pageant which is ever passing before me, but of my own perceiving, thinking, determining self, the mind that reasons, the senses that feel, the heart that loves, the will that acts. And what a wonderful soul that is which reflection discloses to the reverent inquirer! What a well of life is there springing up out of depths which amaze us by their unexpected possibilities and affright us by their impenetrable darkness! We return from the shallow estimates which account a man's worth, if not by the extent of his fortune, at least by the measure of his poor achievement, to that standard of high if unfulfilled aspirations to which none of us is altogether a stranger:—

" Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped ;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

Those are the words of Browning in "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and I am sure they find an echo in every heart which has brooded over the mystery of this strange and solitary existence through which we are passing, and has dared to trust the nobler self.

It is when we dwell upon such thoughts as these that we become aware that few catastrophes are more abject than fullness of bread and a lean soul, satisfactions that wither the character, successes that destroy the life. And when we commit ourselves to the testimony of conscience, assuring us by its inexorable judgments upon conduct that life has no real significance and existence no genuine happiness, save in submission to an Eternal Righteousness which binds all together in a web of universal purpose, then indeed we are convinced that no heavier curse can rest upon us than when the words of the 106th Psalm are brought home in the experience of the vanity of human wishes—"He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul." Not for one moment would I suggest that we are wrong in feeling the sting and pressure of desires which are the inevitable consequences of our manifold nature. So many are the points of contact between ourselves and our mother earth that each one of them becomes the gate through which some need seeks its legitimate satisfaction. It was not wrong that He who, as we read this morning in the Gospel, gave wine at the wed-

ding feast, should during His experience of the desert have desired to make stones bread. It is not wrong for men who live by bread to desire for themselves and for their children such competent means as shall secure them from the approach of famine or even the disability of domestic straits. We are abundantly justified in recognising that there is a bread question, and that it is a reproach to Christian England that, while we have gone far with our inventions and discoveries to obtain a secure mastery over physical forces, we have not yet attained that combination of courage, intelligence, and unselfishness which by the due co-ordination of social forces shall mitigate the risk of recurrent unemployment. But woe be to the man, the family, or the nation that is content to satisfy these lawful desires, to pursue these legitimate ends, at the expense of the Life whereby alone each particular need is to be measured, and which always and in all circumstances is more than food. And as I think on the one hand of Jesus recognising in the undue insistence of a wholly natural appetite a temptation of the Evil One, and opposing it with the sacred truth that man lives not by bread only, but by the Word, and on the other of the multitudes of comfortable citizens who have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes, I hear again that sentence which sums up with simple eloquence a world of human failure, "Verily I say unto

you, they have their reward." For "He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul."

Another human desire, which is not only lawful but is, surely, to be cherished in the best interests of our corporate life, is the desire for a sufficient opportunity of exercising our powers. Equality of opportunity is a familiar phrase which has become one of the watchwords of a party. And I frankly confess that it is because I believe in the natural inequality of men that I am anxious to preserve and to recommend this ideal of Socialism. I may admire the talents of a Prime Minister and yet not commit myself to the opinion that, because he has won his way to that position, he was the fittest man in all his party to be advanced to that exalted station. I may recognise the tact and wisdom of an Archbishop, and yet surmise that, but for the disabling power of circumstance, some obscure teacher in a remote village might have filled Augustine's Chair with a yet more conspicuous success. We are bound, therefore, to see that the barriers which prevent the full use of each man's capacities be not such as it is possible for us to remove. It is not wrong for you to seek the widest field for the exercise of your abilities. But if, as the swift years pass over your head, you begin to see the gate of opportunity closing upon your hopes, and younger men promoted to those tasks which you feel to be worthier of your own capacities than the round of

uncongenial toil in which your weary days are spent, then I beseech you to remember the withering of the spiritual life, the searing of conscience, the provoking of the Lord our God, which, alas! too often accompany the grant of opportunity, and which invest with terrible significance the legend that may with truth be inscribed over many and many a brilliant career—"He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul."

Then what joy is there more pure than that which is the portion of those who have a genius for fellowship? What possession gives a satisfaction more unalloyed than troops of friends? Ancient philosophers have sung its praises. Its acquisition has been cultivated in every age as a fine art. No sight is more pitiable than a friendless and forlorn old man travelling towards a solitary bier unwept and unbeloved. No kingdom is more worldwide than falls to him whom all men love. But it is easier, as Bishop Forbes was wont to say, to win hearts than to save souls. It was by no genial courtship of mankind that Jesus our Saviour gained that universal empire which is His by right. Nay, rather it was with Calvary full in view, that shameful death from which we hide as it were our faces, that He proclaimed the royal word, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." If in those human relationships, which are the tenderest and most beautiful of all earthly

associations, you are not prepared to make Conscience the judge and arbiter of all your intercourse, if you forget that stern self-discipline which can alone protect your dealings one with another by sincerity of purpose, truth of action, and purity of thought, then you will find that what seemed to you the most substantial of all goods is but dust and ashes ; that you have gained but the hollow friendship of the world which is enmity against God ; and that He has given you your desire, but sent leanness withal into your soul.

But what if we have the simple courage to believe, with the plain man who trusts the inward voice, that our life is capable of an infinite satisfaction, and can be fulfilled only from an inexhaustible well ? “ My soul is athirst for God,” like the hart when it desires the waterbrooks. Ah ! why is it that we require so many disappointments before we are brought to the sad acknowledgment that we have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and have been spending money for that which is not bread ? “ I have meat to eat that ye know not of ” were the words of the Son of Man to His amazed disciples when they found Him by the well in converse with the woman of Samaria. “ My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work.” That was the bread of God, the heavenly manna wherewith He was sustained throughout the days of His pilgrimage. “ The angels ministered unto Him.” “ An angel spake to

Him." "There appeared unto Him an angel strengthening Him." "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee; my heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my life and my portion for ever." Such is ever the triumphant faith of those who amid the pain and weariness of the world know the secret of victory. And they who through the reconciling presence of the Son have found in God their eternal stay listen to the Voice which cries, "I am the Bread of Life. Whoso cometh to Me shall never hunger. He that believeth in Me shall never thirst." It is no conventional message of which we have never felt the power that we deliver to you this night. In sorrow, in perplexity, in disappointment our hearts have been cheered with thoughts of Christ the living Bread. And at that Table which in the wilderness is prepared for many guests the angel of the Lord that tarries about them that fear Him waits to be your minister. Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and Christ will give you rest. "Taste and see how gracious the Lord is, for they that fear Him lack nothing." "Your cup shall be full." "The poor shall eat and be satisfied." And you too shall take your part in the thanksgiving of the saints—"In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, Thy comforts have refreshed my soul."

PREDESTINATION AND SERVICE

In St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, at the annual festival of the Korean Mission, 1911

"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers."

MATTHEW xxv. 27.

XII

PREDESTINATION AND SERVICE

THE thought of what to say to you this morning was given to me a few days ago, when I heard the companion parable of the pounds read in the daily lesson. This parable of the talents was selected rather than the other because of the striking word which introduces the Master's retort: "Thou oughtest *therefore*." And the appropriateness of the subject to the business which has gathered us together to-day was brought home to me by a striking passage in Godet's commentary on the Lucan narrative. "This or that pagan population"—so writes the Swiss interpreter—"which might have been evangelised by the young Christian who remained on the earth the slave of selfish ease, shall be committed in the future dispensation to the devoted missionary who has used his powers here below in the service of Jesus."

The listlessness of the average modern man, who never lets himself get red-hot about anything, and who is content to remain mildly interested but

wholly inactive amid the social, political, and religious changes which are going on all round him, is marvellously like the conduct—quixotic because based upon a speculative absurdity—of the servant who buries pounds or hides talents in handkerchiefs. People think that they may just as well let things alone to work out their own results, not considering that this decision is in itself a profound modification of the progress of the world. They are impressed with the austerity, the hardness, the rigour, not indeed of “the Man” with whom they have to do, but of the powers that direct the universe. The spirit of adventure, the creative instinct, the faith that moves mountains, dies within them when they contrast their own feeble personality with the vastness of the external order. What are even great men in the endless chain of causation, which will achieve its effects independently of the petty efforts which level ant-heaps or deflect the course of brooks? If Shakespeare does not write “Hamlet,” the truths that he enunciates will filter into existence from some other source. The steam-engine will get itself invented without a Watt. Wireless telegraphy will hang murderers without a Marconi. Earthquakes have an unpleasant habit of destroying calculations. We fear the hopping of the high hills. It will be all one a hundred years hence. Nay, only take a sufficiently extended view of the universe as it exists to-day, and the excitements

of a few crawlers on the surface of this inferior planet become as negligible as the battle of the frogs and mice. "I knew thee that thou art a hard man. . . . And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent."

What a tragedy it is when those who have the calling of prophets, who have experienced the candle of the Lord kindling within them, who have heard the imperious inward voice, flee from the presence of their conscience, find comfortable liners bound for Tarshish, and pay the fare thereof! These Jonahs appraise Divine warnings, heavenly messages, spiritual truths, by the measure of success with which they are likely to be crowned in a world in which the wicked do not cease from troubling, which the meek do not inherit, and in which moral values and the external order do not seem to coincide. The sun shines on the evil and on the good. The rain falls on the just and on the unjust. The rôle of the prophet begins to assume the aspect of a bootless occupation, because history will shape itself irrespective of the preacher of righteousness. "Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore"—that is the practical logic of it—"I fled before unto Tarshish." Self-assertion in a boundless creation seems a greater absurdity than tilting at wind-mills. Sleeping in a cosy berth is better than going a day's journey into the heart of a city swarming with pagans.

“Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand,
Who for God had been a host
By joining Daniel’s band.”

Now, if there is one way in which the Christian faith does not meet this spirit of pusillanimous inactivity, it is by denying the premisses from which it starts. The greatest men of religion in every age have been those who have realised to the full the invincible will of God, which subdues all things to itself and marches austere forward to the accomplishment of its transcendent purpose. Men who have never read a page of his writings are quick to condemn John Calvin, who, if he had not the good fortune to be a “Catholic,” was one of the most universal thinkers that the history of religion has produced. Whatever criticisms may be rightly passed on those great communities which owe their structure to the genius of this master in theology, the very Calvinism which the thoughtless deride has been the wellspring of an evangelical enthusiasm which ought to provoke the emulation of all Christian men. Taking it all in all, not even the great Latin Church itself has a finer record of missionary labour than the Presbyterian Communion, which has spread the Orient and the African continent with evangelists from Scotland and America, to whose magnificent zeal and intelligent method all those who are acquainted with the mission-field, whatever their

confession, bear eloquent testimony. Far from stunting the personality of the individual, the mighty doctrine of the preordaining purpose, the universal and eternal will of God, austere, inexorable, absolute, leaving, as it were, no room for the creature to stand in, has proved itself, as in the case of a David Livingstone or an Alexander Duff, the wellspring of energy and the fountain of power. For Calvinism in its essence, as distinguished from that travesty of an eternal truth which flourishes mainly in the imperfect understanding of the captious critic, always reappears in the teaching of those who have laid hold most securely of the Catholic gospel. It is stated with a startling absence of compromise in St. Thomas Aquinas. It is a fundamental principle with St. Augustine. It is vividly realised by St. Paul.

There must be few students of the Epistle to the Romans who have not at first felt themselves repelled by the austerity, the hardness, the severity with which he invests the character of God as it is seen in His dealings with the children of men. The Apostle of the Gentiles, whose passionate thirst for the evangelisation of the world, coupled with his statesmanlike outlook upon the problem which it offers, represents the very spirit of Christian missions, is not afraid to use language which, if we are to believe the critics, is calculated to paralyse every effort to claim the earth for God's inheritance. He seems to represent God in His

historical dealings with mankind as careless of the destinies of individuals, if only His Name be established and His will triumphantly fulfilled. "For this cause have I raised thee up"—he quotes the words used by the Book of Exodus concerning Pharaoh—"that I might show in thee My power." Vessels of wrath, no less than vessels of election, are shaped by the celestial Potter. "Whom He will, He hardeneth." Before they had done either good or evil, Jacob did God love and Esau He hated. Is there anything in Calvin, in Aquinas, in Augustine, viewed in its true proportions, which is not justified by the language of St. Paul? Is there anything in the most thoroughgoing determinism of this modern age which is more absolute than the overpowering sense of the resistless hand of God which is evident in the mind of the Christian apostle?

Ah, stay! We have read the New Testament to very little purpose if we do not perceive that Christian theology has its rise, not in a subtle philosophic argument, but in a tremendous personal experience. If St. Paul was certain of one thing it was surely this, that his own position as a redeemed man was entirely and absolutely the act of God's free mercy. It is the experience of the Damascus road that burns with its own undying flame in the great words: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth

mercy." No Arminian dialectic, adopted to secure the freedom of human personality, must for one moment rob him of the blessed fruits of a real and deep experience. His whole theology was present in that blinding flash of the Eternal power and love which revealed in him the Lord Jesus Christ. It meant an unconditional surrender, an absolute capitulation, an utter enslavement of His whole being to that triumphant will, which in the multitude of its compassions had become the victim alike of its own goodness and of its own severity when God suffered on the cross, and which had gathered the manhood of His obedient servant into His own mighty grasp. By his union with Christ, his toils, his labours, his very failures had become identified with the passion of the Eternal God, as He takes His place, a crucified Redeemer, in a world which, by ways of which we know not, He is subduing to Himself.

This is how the Master changes the mean *therefore* of our poor-spirited refusals into the glorious *therefore* of the Christian disciple. This is an austere world, governed by laws and principles which seem to cut athwart and render nugatory the most strenuous efforts of mortal men. Yes, and it has an austere Sovereign, whose lien is upon every harvest, and who makes an inexorable claim upon the reversion of every estate. But He is one who, in assert-

ing His lordship over thy life, has given thee the uttermost proof that His nature and His name is Love. Thou oughtest, therefore, nay rather, thou wilt rejoice to put His money to the exchangers. O redeemed and ransomed man, thou who hast beheld Him bleeding on the tree canst believe that the inscrutable purpose which raises up Pharaohs, which moulds vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, which is in the last resort responsible for the existence of the very devil himself, is really reigning in love over the waterfloods, is directing the tangle and turmoil of the world's history, with the hand of His tender compassion, is guiding the destinies of a universe, which includes "the hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," to that final consummation when God shall be all in all.

Here am I, an average man, who cannot hope to make history, and I am bidden to take my journey into the heart of the great city and uplift my feeble voice. What shall uphold me in the exercise of my powers, in the output of my strength, in the use of my faculties? Nothing but the thought of the greatness, the absolute-ness of God, with whom big and small, failure and success, to-day and to-morrow, are swallowed up in the eternal faithfulness. It is only a slender stock which I can command, but it is His money all of it, minted in eternity, stamped

with the image of the King. Let me, with a right good will, put it to the exchangers, and then when He, who makes the fierceness of men to turn to His praise, and who turns the shadow of death into the morning, shall come with power and great glory, He shall receive His own with usury.

Yes, and even now, when the processes of the Divine Will are still incomplete, we may anticipate in no small degree the true greatness of the good and faithful servant. The mission-field has many examples to show of unsuspected powers, of hidden capacities, of noble gifts manifesting themselves in apostolic witnesses, who, in their younger days, before the occasion made them what in fact they became, might have escaped criticism, had they claimed the privilege, and offered the excuse of the average man. Such, for example, was Chauncey Maples, who achieved a foremost place in the ranks of the pioneers of missionary service before he passed, all too soon as we might think, through the waters of Nyassa to his eternal reward. And to-day my thought travels back across one-and-twenty years to a summer afternoon, when I made the last man in a Cuddesdon eleven that went over to play and to suffer defeat at the hands of the village team in Watlington. No one then would have imagined that the young Cuddesdon curate of that country

parish, so like a hundred others, sane, religious, but undistinguished, who year by year pass through our theological colleges, would in the course of a short career attain a high and honoured place among the founders of the Corean Church. Nor can I forget the impression left upon my mind some years later, when I visited the Cathedral of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, shortly after the appointment of Arthur Beresford Turner to the missionary bishopric, and men spoke of him as an excellent parish priest, and a good fellow, but hardly the sort of man that you would have expected—they said in effect that he was the average man. But He who, watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps, and who all through the ages of its seclusion had been working out His purpose for that ancient land, was even then preparing the marvellous chain of circumstance which was to open the ears of the Coreans to His own gospel, and to fill with His praises the mouth of a worshipping Church. In our Eucharist we magnify His Holy Name for the work which He has wrought in our day—a work which none could have believed though it were told him, and mingle with our praises the thankful memorial of a wise and faithful shepherd, whose eyes have seen God's salvation and whose body rests until the great uprising in the Land of the Morning Calm. May God grant to him who

now takes up the staff that has fallen from the hand of the weary, and whom to-day we would fain assist with our prayers, a double portion of that large and free spirit which will trust God nor be afraid.



THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S VENTURE

In Manchester Cathedral on Sunday, August 7, 1910.

“Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give.”

MATTHEW xx. 23.

XIII

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S VENTURE

JAMES and John asked for fellowship in Christ's crown, and Christ promised them fellowship in His Cross. They desired a kingdom, and He proposed to them a quest. For what they had really asked, however little they understood their own petition, was companionship with Him who was even then on His way to give His life as a ransom. What Christ saw before Himself was the Cross, and what was His to give was fellowship with Himself, on His right hand and on His left indeed, but on Calvary!

The laws of the spiritual kingdom are the laws of common life. Risk is essential to human effort. Nothing is so uninteresting as an anticipated result, an assured victory, a mathematical conclusion. Dead certainties never call forth enthusiasm. It is need of effort that puts men on their mettle. Where there are no possibilities of surprise there is no joy in success. The stubborn temper which can play a losing game is a much more valuable asset than the complacence which

takes advantage of the swelling wave or floats to shore upon the flowing tide. The Alpine climber who is prepared to encounter difficulties only vaguely foreseen, who cuts his own insecure steps, who clings to the all but perpendicular rock, is a being far removed from the general crowd of travellers carried to the top of what seems an inaccessible peak on the cogwheels of a mountain railway. It is the spirit of the hunter, of the sailor, of the adventurer which, for all its apparent foolhardiness and lack of serious purpose, has the promise of progressive life. We need be no apologists for the racecourse or the gaming-table to understand that the fascination which such diversions exercise over the multitude is not wholly base or altogether evil. The spirit that sends men out in search of adventures or urges them to hazard fortune and even life itself belongs to the noble side of human nature, and is necessary to the advance of nations. Nor is there anything more deadening to the creative powers of the race, more destructive of the faith of the peoples, than a determinism like that which filled the jaded imagination of the writer of Ecclesiastes. "That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

Nothing comes out more clearly from an attentive study of the gospel than the reality of the

moral struggle in which the Saviour of the world engaged. The exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of the Father was not achieved without that element of risk which is the essential condition of all human success. If this is not so, then the human experience of the Son of God ceases to be a reality, and becomes a hollow pageant instead of a splendid triumph. For if the will of the worker is enlisted in the struggle, if the tenacity of his own inflexible purpose is the chief factor in the conclusion, then before the event the issue must always hang in the balance, there must always be that element of doubt which gives zest to the trial. If from the first the spectator is assured of the result, it is because he trusts the skill, the endurance, above all the determination of him who is fighting his way to victory, not because the conditions of the game are so regulated that, as on the stage, the palm is already awarded before the struggle is begun. The conviction with which the champion himself enters the lists does not exclude the moment of eager, breathless suspense. David approaches the giant with the sling and the stone, but he must do all he knows if he is to escape the sword of Goliath. The cheer which cleaves the air when the battle is won is rendered possible only by the dread possibility that the day might have been lost. Nor does Christ enter the field of earthly conflict like the god from a machine in the Greek drama who

saves the situation by his irresistible might. No ; the wonder and power of the gospel as we receive it is that it presents to us the Son of God achieving a salvation for men under the conditions of their own life. The Resurrection is not a foregone conclusion when Jesus is born at Bethlehem. He must Himself achieve it precisely as all the sons of men, taking the risk of human existence, work out their own destiny through peril and toil and pain. Every step of the road by which He climbs the steep ascent of heaven carries Him into an untravelled future. He speaks of His life as His temptations. You do not suppose that temptation is possible where there is no trembling uncertainty. The salvation of a world once hung upon the slender thread of one human will. Christ met Satan in the howling wilderness. In the garden His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. I say that here was no human struggle unless before the Son of Man there opened two pathways, unless at those awful moments in His pilgrimage Christ, and with Him Christianity itself, stood at the cross-roads. My own experience assures me that there is no such thing as choice unless the decision which in fact prevails is the free determination of a will which might have refused the path along which alone victory was possible. Is there, then, uncertainty with God? How could the Son of God at any moment have stood between failure and success? These are questions which I cannot

answer. The death of Christ proclaims Him very man, His resurrection marks Him off as Son of God. Here in itself is a paradox which thought can never reconcile. This does not disturb me, for no greater problem confronts me than that which my own existence presents. But just as I will not deny my own freedom of choice, upon which all activity depends, and which the unsophisticated intelligence of practical men refuses to surrender, because I confess myself to be the workmanship of an Almighty hand, the vessel shaped by the Eternal Potter, the result of a long development which science is attempting to read, so in contemplation of the Passion of the Son of Man my first demand is that it shall be real. What are certainties in the secret purpose of the Father are dependent on moral effort, are achieved by the voluntary stress of a human personality, and are therefore glorious uncertainties so far as they concern us in the revelation which He has made to us in the Son. It is because He overcomes that He sits down with the Father upon His throne. He is convinced that at last He will Himself be manifested in glory with the holy angels, but He tells His disciples that He knows neither the day nor the hour. He chooses twelve, and experiences the poignant grief of the discovery that one of them is a devil. He is disappointed at the failure of His preaching, and marvels at men's unbelief. He weeps at the grave

of Lazarus. From beginning to end His career is the supreme venture of faith. Not by His exact knowledge of the future but by His perfect trust in the Father was the Saviour of the world sustained. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." That was the cup that the Father had given Him to drink. That was the baptism where-with He had been baptized. He could commit Himself to the awful risks of the Passion because He abode in the Divine fellowship. "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me."

It is into the communion of the Eternal Love that Christ calls His followers. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." If even the Divine Son in the days of His flesh was content not to see the distant scene so long as He was not separated from the love of the Father, we in our turn may face life bravely simply because we see Jesus and trust His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway." To have given our troth to Him for better for worse, for richer for poorer; to have been initiated into the companionship of His home, to sit at His table and to drink out of His cup, to be permitted to go shares with Him in the perils of our earthly lot, to abide in His love even when it involves the fellowship of His sufferings, that is a kingly heritage for loyal hearts. "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."

There is no more difficult art in the world than

friendship. It demands a constant and unremitting activity of the whole personality if it is to issue in a trust that is beforehand with experience. You must be prepared to labour at the task day by day and hour by hour if love is to be the guiding principle of life. It is no slippered virtue, no lazy companion of the leisure hour. The genius of true friendship is an infinite capacity for taking pains. So with that most intimate bond of friendship which is the fountain of the race. For this cause must a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife; he must hold on with the grip of a strong and serious purpose if marriage is to be anything more than a mere convenience of social life. And Christ never makes any secret of the demands which He imposes upon those who would come after Him. Take up thy cross. Sell all that thou hast. Let the dead bury their own dead. Leave all and follow. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?" It is a hard and not an easy thing to be a Christian.

"We are able." What did it mean, this brave answer of the young men, whose generous enthusiasm for the Master already placed Him on the throne, and who asked for nothing more than to sit as His assessors on either hand? What if the glamour in their eyes prevented them from seeing the wooden cross and the thorny

crown. Still, it was Christ's throne that they would fain attend. But at least it was the kingdom in a few brief years restored to Israel, and the King in His beauty reigning from Jerusalem that filled their thoughts. "We are able." It could not be that James foresaw the defeat of his expectation and the headsman's sword that was to be his portion. It could not be that John discerned from afar the rolling years which should carry from him one by one the companions of his youthful hope, and the lonely Ægean rock, and the vision of the saints beneath the altar who cried, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Nay, the times and the seasons it was not for them to know, the secret of the strange unfolding of the Divine purpose it was not for them to penetrate. But it did mean that to them to live was Christ, that they were prepared to stake all upon His personality, that the Lord Himself and not His throne was the true object of their love and loyalty. It is those who will adventure all for Jesus, who will take the risks of His service, who are so sure of Him that they will burn their boats to continue at His side, who will trust themselves to the unknown because He goes before—it is they that will alone endure in the cloudy and dark day.

Christ's own triumph was only reached by a resurrection. He overcame death by submitting to it. He gained all only by losing all. He set

out upon His mission because He loved the Father. When it meant the closing in of every prospect, the scorn and hatred of the men whom He had come to save, the melting of His hopes, the desertion of His chosen friends, the agony of the Garden and the pain of the cross, the darkness of Calvary, the withdrawal of the Father's smile—He still chose the Father. He chose Him not because as a forlorn sufferer He still looked for horses and chariots of fire, or hoped at the eleventh hour to command the legions of heaven, but because God, and God alone, was worthy of His allegiance. The joy in which He endured the cross, despising the shame, was the supreme joy of giving up everything for God, obedient even unto death. Into fellowship with that joy He summons us when He turns upon us and demands whether we are prepared to give up everything for Him.

But do not mistake the question. Many men decide that they are not able to make sacrifices for Christ because they do not know whether they would be ready to die for Him, or at any rate to confess Him under hard circumstances which their imagination pictures, but which, for all they know, may never arise. They refuse to be confirmed, they decline to keep tryst with their Lord at the Holy Table, because, as the phrase goes, they do not know whether they will be able to live up to it. This is the sort of

spirit which in any other department of life they would scout as unworthy of a brave man. Do they, for example, hesitate to embark their capital in business until they have made absolutely certain that there is no possibility of failure? Does the athlete refuse to enter for a competition until he has made perfectly sure that he can stand against all comers? "Nothing venture, nothing have" is a proverb of universal application. Did Christian, think you, when he left the City of Destruction and entered the wicket gate which admitted him to the Narrow Way, foresee the Hill Difficulty, or the Valley of Humiliation, or the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or the persecutions of Vanity Fair, or the waters of the dark river that flowed over him before he came to the gates of the Celestial City? Did Hannington anticipate the axe of the African executioner or Williams his martyrdom in Eromanga? Was Peter wrong when first he left his fishing-boat to follow Jesus, because in the judgment hall of the High Priest he was to deny his Lord? No! These are the men whom Christ wants, the men of generous impulse and adventurous heart, who will enter into the romance of His service, who in the glorious faith of a surrendered manhood will dare to run the risk of the years, will use language larger in its sweep than their young experience can grasp. "We are able"—the great response rings down the

centuries, as it is caught up by fresh lips and expresses the eager loyalty of other hearts. It is the men who discover continents, who lead forlorn hopes, who fare forth as adventurers upon trackless seas, that make the noblest Christians, and undismayed follow Him that rideth on the white horse, arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood, whose Name is called the Word of God. They are the knights of His Table Round, who share His cup and are sworn to maintain His cause. "We are able"—Christ would win the same response from loyal hearts in Manchester to-day—generous souls who will be true to Him for His own infinite worth, who would count it an honour to attend His drooping pennon from the stricken field, and to whom in failure as in success He is and ever will be Christ the King.

E.—THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS

“TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON”

In the Chapel of Harrow School, June 18, 1911.

“He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”

1 PETER iii. 19.

XIV

“TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON”

JUST because the Bible is a real, living, human book there are bound to be things in it which it is very difficult to understand. It is, of course, true that any book which has come down to us through many centuries is liable, as many of you are aware, to corruptions of the text, which misrepresent what the author himself intended to say, and the Bible has not escaped the lot of every manuscript which is entrusted to the care of fallible mortals. But I am thinking of something more fundamental still. Take Shakespeare, for example. The great dramatist wrote for the time in which he lived, just as Gilbert and Sullivan wrote for the latter days of the nineteenth century. There are, I will be bound, many things in an opera like “Patience” which seem simple and straightforward, I was going to say to you and me, certainly to older people like the Headmaster and myself, but which it would tax the genius of the most acute critic to make plain to the men and women of Anno Domini 2911. Such a phrase, for

example, as "a most intense young man" requires a knowledge of what was known as the æsthetic craze in order to raise an instantaneous smile. I do not know whether you still study Shakespeare with the help of Mr. Aldis Wright. If you do, I think you must often wonder whether he has got the right sow by the ear in those entirely necessary but often deadly dull notes which are the plague even of a sixth form.

Now it is precisely the same with the Bible. I do not wonder in the least that from time to time even in the New Testament we come across a passage which seems to us inexplicable. Have you ever thought, for example, what St. Paul means in 1 Corinthians by those "that are baptized for the dead"? The true reason why perhaps no man ever shall explain the phrase is that the apostle was writing under conditions which have passed away. No doubt the allusion was at once clear to those for whom the letter was intended, but it means very little to us because we have not got the clue. And there is a passage in the Gospel according to St. Matthew which affects me, when I read it, just in the same way as do those words of St. Paul. Perhaps you will remember how the evangelist is telling us about the strange and impressive things which happened when Jesus on the cross yielded up His spirit. The veil of the Temple, he tells us, was rent in twain, while the earth quaked and the rocks were riven. Then he goes on as follows :

"And the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many." The words that I do not understand are "after His resurrection." They do not seem to me to be appropriate, when the writer is describing what took place on Good Friday. Now there may be corruption of the text or some misunderstanding of authorities to account for this perplexing statement. But again I am inclined to believe that if we were those Hebrew Christians of the first century for whom the Gospel was originally written, we should read the narrative with very different eyes.

And the portion of 1 Peter which has been read as the second lesson this evening presents us with just such another difficulty. Twice over it occurs, first in the passage from which my text is taken, and then later in the fourth chapter, which says that "the gospel" (*i.e.*, the glad news of salvation through the name of Jesus) "was preached unto the dead." Now I suppose that any one who read these two passages together for the first time would understand the writer of the Epistle to mean that when Christ had suffered for sins upon the cross, His spirit went down into the realms of the departed to proclaim the good news of forgiveness to the souls of those who had disobeyed the preaching of Noah before the flood, in order that

they might repent and be saved through Christ for ever. And I cannot imagine how any one, remembering the familiar words of the Apostles' Creed, in which we declare our belief that "He descended into hell," could fail to connect these statements with that mysterious article of the Christian Faith.

They have not, however, been always so interpreted. Some of those who have most strenuously maintained the doctrine of the descent into Hell have seen no connection between the two, and have tried to explain St. Peter's language in a way more conformable to the ordinary imagination. They tell us that the apostle wants us to understand that long, long ago, when those old antediluvians, who are now disembodied spirits, imprisoned in the realms of the departed, were still upon the earth, the Son of God, who afterwards took our nature upon Him in the Person of Jesus Christ, used Noah as His mouthpiece to warn the disobedient while the ark was preparing.

Well, I do not think they are right. Apart altogether from a small but important difference of reading, about which I need not trouble you, but which the sixth may puzzle out for themselves afterwards, if they are sufficiently interested, I do not believe St. Peter would have called a stern warning like this a piece of good news. And I remember that it was St. Peter himself who on the day of Pentecost cited the remarkable passage

from the Psalms which everybody concurs in regarding as an authority for the language of the Apostles' Creed—"Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades." What the apostle says is that the 16th Psalm, from which the words come, foresaw what would happen to God's Messiah and "spake of the resurrection of the Christ." His mind, you see, had been dwelling upon some mysterious activities of our Lord in that sequestered state which He shared for a few brief hours with the souls of those who await the final judgment. And it seems to me that what he tells us in this Epistle is only part of an ancient teaching which has now largely disappeared from the view of the Christian Church. When you go to Florence (if you have not yet been there) you will visit the Convent of St. Mark. You will see there the wonderful frescoes with which Fra Angelico brightened the cells of the friars. And among them none perhaps is more beautiful than that which represents the Saviour fresh from His crucifixion, as He enters the dark chambers of the departed. I cannot describe it better than in the words of a hymn which some of you may have heard sung of a Good Friday evening:—

"In the gloomy realms of darkness
Shines a light unknown before,
For the Lord of dead and living
Enters at the open door.

Lo ! the heavenly light around Him
 As He draws His people near ;
 All amazed they stand rejoicing
 At the gracious words they hear.

For Himself proclaims the story
 Of His own Incarnate life ;
 And the death He died to save us,
 Victor in that awful strife.

Patriarch and Priest and Prophet
 Gather round Him as He stands ;
 In adoring faith and gladness,
 Hearing of the piercèd Hands.

Oh, the bliss to which He calls them,
 Ransom'd by His precious Blood
 From the gloomy realms of darkness
 To the Paradise of God !"

What the sweet old Dominican painter and the English Archbishop who wrote the hymn bring before our imagination is an old belief of Christians, so old as to be scarcely capable of explanation as the invention of the ages of superstition, which tells how Jesus proclaimed the reconciling power of the work which He had finished on Calvary to those good men of whom we read in the Old Testament—Abraham, and Moses, and David—who died in faith, not having received the promises. Part of the picture may well be the embroidery of imagination. And yet, taking it with those dim references in 1 Peter to a work of Christ which we can only faintly understand, I cannot help thinking that if we had

been among those sojourners of the Dispersion to whom the letter was written, instead of being modern men of the twentieth century, we should have no difficulty in recognising the apostle's meaning, and would know that the words "I believe that He descended into hell" stood for a very real experience in the life of the early Christians.

But you will now be saying, "Why have you come up the hill to tell us this?" Well, I thought that perhaps you might be interested. And it is never lost time if we try to help people to approach the greatest book in the world with a more intelligent and thoughtful appreciation. But, if you will not lose patience with me, I will endeavour to show you that what has been said about this difficult passage will enable us to find a very real and living truth in those words which we often drone out carelessly enough when we recite our Creed. I did not always see what the words meant myself. I cannot say that I have gained a very full knowledge even yet. Probably I never shall, till by God's mercy I know even as also I am known. But there is one very great thought that I have learned to connect with the descent of our Lord into Hades.

Well! You have, I know, a great admiration for that fine old uncle of yours, the colonel with the iron-grey moustache and erect bearing who has served in India. He knows whatever there is

to know about polo, and, what is more, he can keep his temper at golf. You remember when he stayed with you in the country last summer. He never misses Church parade, and so, of course, he went to the village church for morning service. It was the day that funny old yellow-faced missionary from the Punjab occupied the pulpit, and there was a collection for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. And you remember what your uncle said about it all over his cheroot in the billiard-room. Many a half-dressed heathen had he seen who was a better man than those "who profess and call themselves Christians." Your uncle knows the Prayer Book, you see. He has never wavered in his loyalty to Church and King. And he knows India. Of course he does. He has been there. It is true that the faded lady, with the beautiful face and the impossible frock, who is the missionary's wife, and whom the vicar's sister brought to tea at 4.30, has been in and out of the Zenanas these thirty years, which your uncle, like the rest of us, could only see at a missionary exhibition, and then they would be empty. But then he knows all about the cantonments, where any man can pick up a thorough knowledge of India in half an hour. So you may take it from him that this missionary business is all a mistake. Well, you may take it from me that there are no fish in the Thames. I ought to know, for I am often on the Victoria Embankment.

Now I do not want you to think that I wish to throw cold water upon our friend the colonel. He has his limitations, like the rest of us. But after all at the back of his mind there is a problem which sooner or later, whether we know it or not, all of us are called to face. Christ, we say, is the Redeemer of the world, and there is no other name whereby we must be saved. What, then, are we to think of the millions who live and die without ever hearing His name? There are good pagans. There are many unbelievers who put to the blush those who call themselves the disciples of Jesus. Had we not better be content to say that, while Christianity is undoubtedly an excellent religion, still there are many others with which men may be content to struggle along, which have produced noble results, and which may perhaps be better adapted to some people than that which we ourselves profess?

Such an argument is not at all unnatural. We have after all to deal with facts. The world was in existence, and inhabited by human beings like ourselves, many thousands of years before it knew anything of Jesus Christ. And Christians are still in a minority. If Christianity were indeed the universal religion, would it not have "caught on," if the expression may be allowed, rather more quickly than in fact it has? But at the same time no man, whose being has really been thrilled with the message of the Cross, like St. Paul, for example,

could for a moment restrict his preaching or moderate his enthusiasm for the gospel. He must proclaim Christ to a perishing world which is without hope because it is without God. The truth of his New Testament, the very principles of his religion, are compromised if he slackens his efforts in obedience to what he believes to be the demands of the facts of life and the love of God.

But we shall make a fatal mistake if we imagine that this difficulty is new in the experience of mankind. How, then, has it been met by Christians in the past? Look, for example, at what has been written by Dante, who knew more about it all than your uncle, though he did live in the fourteenth century. He asks the very question that troubles us. Here it is in the 19th Canto of the "Paradiso":

"A man
Is born on Indus' banks, and none is there
Who speaks of Christ, nor who doth read nor write;
And all his inclinations and his acts,
As far as human reason sees, are good;
And he offendeth not in word or deed;
But unbaptized he dies, and void of faith.
Where is the justice that condemns him?"

And how does he deal with it? Well, he sees in Paradise itself two spirits of men who in this world were certainly never Christians. One is Trajan, the Roman Emperor, whose column stands under the shadow of the capitol. Not only was he pagan, but he persecuted the Christians. It was in his reign that Ignatius was torn by beasts in the

Amphitheatre. The other was a hero, who was described by Vergil in the Second Book of the *Æneid*, which I once had to learn by heart, as of all the Trojans *servantissimus æqui*—most observant of right. How came they to those blissful seats? Not, as Dante describes it, by any righteousness of their own, far less by the heathen religion, such as it was, into which they were born. No, he is too good a Christian to be content with any shallow explanation. This is what he says:—

“They quitted not their bodies as thou deem’st,
Gentiles, but Christians ; in firm rooted faith,
This, of the feet in future to be pierced,
That, of feet nail’d already to the cross.”

Then the poet goes on to recall the mediæval story, how Gregory the Great prayed for Trajan, and how in answer to his prayers the Emperor was allowed to return into the flesh for so long as was necessary for him to gaze in faith on the Crucified. And of Ripheus he tells how God Himself had opened his eye to the coming redemption. But these are legends, these are conjectures. How can they help our thoughts to-day? Do you not see what it is that is really Christian in the mind of Dante, where he differs from the slipshod reasoning of the smoking-room? There is nothing narrow or intolerant in his outlook, but he knows that no one will reach God’s rest who has not washed his robes and made them white in the blood of Jesus.

But this is precisely what this ancient Epistle

had asserted, fourteen centuries before Dante, when it declared that Christ, who had suffered for sins once, that He might bring the unrighteous to God, went and preached to the spirits in prison. Its author has in his mind no examples of pagan excellence, but those types of disobedience who were swept away by the Flood. He magnifies the Cross as the only way. So God loved the world, that when He devised means whereby His banished should not be expelled from Him, He left no stone unturned to reach the wayward hearts of men. "Unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead."

The apostle would make us more passionate believers in the Name of Jesus. There is only one thing in heaven and in earth in which it is worth while for you and me to believe. We hear a vast deal about manly honour and gentlemanly bearing, the traditions of a great school and the citizenship of a mighty empire. These are all good, though the word "empire" always makes me shudder. But what impresses me most, when in the pages of the New Testament there are revealed those realms which are inhabited by God and the spirits of the dead, and in which we also dwell, is the smallness of so many things which are called big. There is a mystery into which angels desire to look. There is a message which is still glorious in the ears of those for whom this passing world is done. It is that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

TRANSFIGURED PATRIOTISM

In St. Paul's Cathedral on the Sunday after Ascension, 1909.

“Our commonwealth is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS iii. 20 (R.V., marg.).

XV

TRANSFIGURED PATRIOTISM

IN the author of those words we have a typical and splendid instance of the transformation of patriotism under the benign influences of the gospel. No one was more roundly cursed by the loud-mouthed patriots of his day than the Apostle Paul. "I could wish," was the response of his great soul, "that I myself were anathema from Christ for the sake of my brothers." "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live!" was the yell of the infuriated populace. "Brothers," was the passionate cry of the apostle, "my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they may be saved." This phenomenon was not new in the history of a Jerusalem which killed the prophets. Nowhere is the love of country more grandly and accurately expressed than in the writings of the Weeping Prophet, in whose call St. Paul seems to have traced the leading features of his own, and who was execrated as a traitor to the national cause. "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him" are the

words of Jeremiah, "but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country":—

"And ill we sleep, sae sair we weep,
But sweet and fast sleep they;
And the mool that haps them roun' and laps them
Is e'en their country's clay;
But the land we tread that are not dead
Is strange as night by day."

Swinburne in the Jacobite's lament, Jeremiah in his dirge for the Judean exiles, St. Paul in his splendid self-effacement have reached the bedrock of patriotism. It is broad as human nature itself, because it is the reverse of the cosmopolitanism of the soldier of fortune. Dugald Dalgety would never have been among the Flowers of the Forest that fell at Flodden. It sticks to the land like Jeremiah; yet, like him, it is not afraid to say, "Fall away to the Chaldeans." It tingles in the blood like the strong sympathy of race that burned in St. Paul, but fears not to incur the undying hatred of a whole nation when it leads him boldly to proclaim, "We turn to the Gentiles."

Let us then be quite sure what the fine sentiment of patriotism really is before we go on to inquire how it is transfigured in the Christian character. Like charity, it vaunteth not itself, nor stands either on the achievements or the resources which are supposed to mark a nation's greatness. It is the affection which bound Sir

Walter Scott to the "honest grey hills" that rise from the banks of the Tweed. It is that passion for "this dear, dear land," which can hail "this little world" of England as a "precious stone set in the silver sea." It is the grand yearning which led the great exile to speak of the sweet bosom of the city that had cast him out, "in which, with all peace to her, I long with all my heart to rest my weary soul." It inspires the Fleming and Dane no less than the son of an Imperial people. If I forget thee, O mother that bore me, let my right hand forget her cunning—that is loyalty, that is patriotism, that is the sentiment of race which belongs to the noble humanity which Jesus Christ has redeemed. St. Paul was far too loyal, far too human a man to ignore the claim of patriotism when to the Philippians, tempted to mind earthly things, he proclaimed, "Our commonwealth is in heaven." The very figure under which he asserts the bond of a higher allegiance would seem to show the contrary. He who understood the claim of earthly citizenship could find no diviner image than that of the celestial city. But so whole-hearted a Christian could never have divided his life between two concurrent loyalties; far less adopt that easy compromise which is familiarly described as making the best of both worlds. For him there was but one world, one sphere of action, one motive dominating the whole career. To have seen the glorified Nazarene was to have yielded

every thought to His obedience and to know nothing save Jesus Christ. No part of his activity could move on a lower or a different plane. He was the bond-slave of the Lord. To him to live was Christ. So here he does not say, "We seek a city that shall be hereafter," but "Our commonwealth is even now in heaven." The portals of the everlasting were unfolded, never again to be closed, when they took in the King of Glory. For every Christian He is the Master of the House, the King of the Spiritual City, which is seen even now as in a vision splendid descending out of heaven from God. We live and move and have our being in a kingdom which is not of this world. That is the very meaning of St. Paul's appeal in this place. It is those that mind earthly things whose evil example he bids every loyal Christian to shun—those whose god is their belly, because, while claiming a conventional Christian fellowship, they conform to the standards of the world and render to Cæsar the things that belong to God. The disciple must call no man master upon the earth. "One is your Master, even Christ." Surely here we have that other-worldliness to which national flags are but strips of coloured cloth and patriotic sentiment but an asset in the game of politics. Where is the Christian's treasure there also is his heart. "For our commonwealth is in heaven."

Nay, but we have read St. Paul to little purpose

if we fail to detect the flaw in this hasty conclusion. Follow the passage further and its true bearing stands revealed. "Our commonwealth is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory." The faith of a Christian involves a present reality; it involves also a great expectancy. It does not withdraw us from the common business of mankind. It sends us back with brighter hopes, with a new and larger prospect, to duties and occupations transfigured by the vision of the glorified Body of which Christ is Himself the Saviour. You have, it may be, experienced the dull despair which settles on the spirit of the traveller who has but lately traversed all too swiftly the smiling pastures of the Midlands, as at the end of his journey the train threads its way among the gaunt and blackened factories of one of those industrial cities which now defile with their obtrusive ugliness some of the noblest of our northern dales. But if you have ever looked upon that same city under the spell of sunset, when from the glowing western clouds an unimagined radiance streams upon the guardian hills, and the clustering chimneys, which in the daytime flout romance, present a perspective as of slender aspiring columns, you have seen a sight than which England can show few more fair. And

that is how the celestial gleam transforms the familiar pictures of our daily experience by touching them with the Divine radiance of the gospel. Keble has expressed this in a couplet well known to most:—

“Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be
As more of heaven in each we see.”

When, therefore, we bring the thought of our heavenly citizenship to bear upon our earthly patriotisms what we find is that the heavenly does not destroy but perfects the earthen by bringing all lesser loyalties into subjection to the laws of the Eternal Kingdom. A Christian nation is no mere secular State whose members profess adherence to the Christian faith, still less is it a country whose only recognisable connection with the Son of God is the maintenance of an Established Church. A nation may be deeply Christian and yet take no official cognisance of Christian institutions. It may extend an equal enfranchisement to those who have never been admitted to the fellowship of Christ's religion and yet manifest the spirit of the gospel. What are the principles that guide its action? What are the laws that govern its development? Are its people walking in the light of the new city or groping in the darkness of the old empire?

We have only time to glance at one department of national life—its relation to armament and

war. There is a wonderful passage in the "Divine Comedy" where Dante describes the huge giants which he saw surrounding the ninth circle of the infernal pit like the towers which grimly rise above the walls of Monteregion. The sight of these mighty forms suggests to his mind a commentary on the disappearance of such giants from the earth :—

"All-teeming Nature, when her plastic hand
Left framing of these monsters, did display
Past doubt her wisdom, taking from mad War
Such slaves to do his bidding."

War in the mind of the Christian poet was a belated survival of a past away from which the world was moving. So, too, the Book of Genesis. "There were giants in the earth"—*nephilim*, men of war from their youth, supermen, dreadnoughts—"there were giants in the earth in those days." "In those days"—the bold, bad days before the Flood, when, in the striking language of the ancient writer, "every imagination of the heart of man was only evil continually." Do you not read the interpretation of the parable? Goliath of Gath stands for the usurpation of force over spirit, of brute matter over the rational mind, of the kingdom of Beelzebub over the Kingdom of Heaven. With David, the man after God's own heart, is the accomplishment of the Divine purpose, as even of Saul's armour he declares, "I

cannot go with these." It is with other weapons that the victories of the Lord of Hosts are won. And shall the Christian patriot, who looks for the transfiguration of the kingdoms of this world by the revelation from heaven of the Prince of Peace, and who knows by faith that even now his commonwealth is where sits the ascended Christ, trust for his country's welfare, not to the triumphant forces of the world to come, but to the nice calculations of material strength?

A few weeks ago there appeared in a journal which is not accustomed to appeal to the hysteria of the British nation, and which plumes itself upon the high rationality of its tone, the truly astonishing statement that for us in Europe the "door is closed, at any rate for this generation," to "the reign of peace and reason," and that "he is no true friend of his country who pretends otherwise." Think what it means for our manhood to declare that the door is shut upon the reign of reason. Think what it means to acquiesce in a secular patriotism whose ideal is to keep Jericho straitly shut up and not to build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land. But, brothers and kinsfolk, our help standeth in the Name of the Lord. Be not faithless, but believing. Christ is our glory. God is our strong tower. Fidelity to the heavenly commonwealth is the wall of fire around the Englishman's home. He is the Christian patriot who shall proclaim the

reconciling peace of God, the glad news of the Divine forgiveness resting upon a people's life, the splendid hope of brotherhood, whether of individuals or classes or nations, which springs out of the recognition of Him from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named. It is when there is no such vision as this that the people perish. I cannot away with a bellicose apologetic in the mouth of the Christian priest. Let us leave to those who practise statecraft to take counsel on national safety. And let those who from the pulpits of this land would speak the word of truth be bold to say that the God whom we worship through Jesus Christ is He "who maketh wars to cease, who knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariot in the fire."

We look for a Saviour. This is the expectation with which we toil, the goal for which we labour. The great hope of the world is the return of this same Jesus, for whose entry at the end of His redeeming work the gates of heaven have lifted up their joyful heads, to whose feet, throned amid the eternal praises, are to be brought the glory and honour of the nations. If in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, the New Testament lends no sanction to the doctrine that in the great unnumbered multitude that throngs the Kingdom nationality has no place. Nay, "the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it."

But it is "this same Jesus" that claims the kingdoms, and of the increase of whose government shall be no end. "This same Jesus"—recognised by the print of the nails in hands and feet and by the spear-wound in the side; "this same Jesus"—whose crown is not of iron but of thorns, and whose victory has been achieved in the blood of His own heart; "this same Jesus"—whose blazon is not the sundering sword but the reconciling Cross, who is acclaimed by the multitudes of the redeemed as the Lamb that was slain, and who reigns not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit; "this same Jesus"—the pale Galilean, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and so become the victorious Saviour of men, "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go."

The citizen of the heavenly commonwealth will so love the land of his fathers as to desire, above all things, to see it the brightest jewel in the Saviour's crown. To him God's Englishmen will be they who would fain behold the laws of the spiritual kingdom dominating the imagination and controlling the policy of the dear country for whose honour their eyes keep vigil, and for whose life they would freely yield their own. They will be such as banish frivolity and bring the spirit of discipline and service into the homes of the people, not lest the enemy should take them unawares, but lest the Master of the House should

come and not find His servants watching. To them life, not goods, will be the standard of the nation's wealth, for it is the life that is more than food, and no clothing can compare with the body which Christ bought with Blood. A community wherein Divine reason is ever gaining upon brute force, and the development of public duties is of more account than the conservation of private interests ; a commonwealth in which Christ and His righteousness is the interpretation of "God and my Right"—that is the transfigured ideal of the Christian patriot, who is himself looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, and whose noblest ambition it is to dwell among a people prepared for a returning Lord.



THE RESTORED TEMPLE AND THE
REBUILDING OF THE CITY

At Selby Abbey on the Sunday after the re-opening, 1909.

“I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies ; My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem.”

ZECHARIAH i. 16.

XVI

THE RESTORED TEMPLE AND THE REBUILDING OF THE CITY

LAST Tuesday in this restored Abbey Church you listened to a sermon from your eloquent Archbishop on the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the gates of which had been burned with fire, and heard the promise of the Prophet Haggai that the latter glory of this house should be greater than the former. To-night, while your hearts are still warm with the festal joy of a great recovery, I would direct your thoughts to the words of that plain, honest, sincere man who was Haggai's contemporary and companion in labour as he stirs the conscience of his people to read the lessons of the past and create the hopes of the future—"Return unto Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will return unto you."

Zechariah had seen the noble house on Mount Moriah rise from amid the desolations of a former generation. A man of priestly race, he had a deep sympathy with the past, and rejoiced in the renewed celebration of the ancestral worship,

the voices of the choir once more uplifted in hallowed courts, the oblations yet again laid upon the altar of offering. But he was also a prophet, and as such, in the spirit of the great men of the olden time who had proclaimed the eternal world, he could not rest till not alone upon the garment of the high priest, but upon the very bells of the horses should be inscribed the legend, "Holiness to the Lord !"

You have rebuilt Selby Abbey. Your next task is to rebuild Selby. The latter glory of this house must be greater than the former, because it is the Church of the New Age. The work of Ezra calls aloud for that of Nehemiah. There must be some proportion between the Temple of the Lord and the dwellings of His people. Cathedrals are too often God's silent protest against the apology for civilisation that clusters round them. I say cathedrals advisedly, lest I should seem to cast any particular reflection upon the town in which I am speaking. These old Hebrews would have failed to carry out God's purpose if they had built the Temple, if they had re-established the ritual, if they had set going once again the round of fast and festival, and left the population that gathered about the walls of the sanctuary to shelter themselves as best they might, to erect such dwellings as they could, and to plant a sorry substitute for a city on the holy hill of Zion. The repair of the city no less than the rebuilding of the Temple was

a work of religion. Both had their place in God's progressive scheme for the salvation of the world through the redemption of Israel's captivity. "Why should not my countenance be sad," cried Nehemiah to his imperial master, "when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" It was to build, not a place of worship but the homes of the people, that this Hebrew patriot came to Jerusalem. The Temple is already rising as the hope and pledge of a fairer future amid the ruins of the past. We follow the Commissioner as, with his great schemes still locked in the secrecy of his own breast, he takes his romantic ride in the silence of the night through the wreckage of the streets. He visits the Dragon's Well and the Fountain Gate. By the King's Pool the roadway was so badly blocked that there was no room for the beast that was under him to pass. The glamour which the pale moonlight sometimes sheds over sordid ugliness, when it seems to make the meanest hovel a fairy palace, failed to fascinate the eye of Nehemiah. He saw the evil case of Jerusalem, the breaches in the wall, the waste places and the ruinous heaps. "The work," his heart told him, "is great and large." "Now, O God, strengthen Thou my hands."

Now, I need hardly tell you that the rebuilding of the city, in the vision which Zechariah had already given of it, meant something far nobler

than the mere replacement of the material fabric which had been destroyed. If it had meant no more than this there would be nothing very appropriate in the choice of such a subject for my sermon to-night. It might suffice, though a more suitable occasion might be chosen, to warn you to insure your houses against such a catastrophe. And Selby stood unharmed on that chill October night when its Abbey was lapped by the devouring flames. When I claim that the reconstruction of the city is the task that awaits all those who have set their hands to the repair of the sanctuary, I think rather of that development of the social life whereof the future shall affirm that old things have passed away and that all things have become new.

When, in his dream, Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line in his hand, the contractor's apprentice, as it might be, going out to survey the foundations of the city, an angel bids the prophet, "Then, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls . . . for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire." You read the meaning of the vision. The common life of the future must be a very different thing from the crowded conditions of the olden time. Not the fear of a foreign foe, driving men to seek protection behind cramping barriers, but the corporate life of a growing community, springing out of a vigorous faith in the Divine Father-

hood, must henceforth be the principle that makes men of one mind in a house. One family we dwell in Him; our God is a strong tower. This is a view of human life which transforms our whole relations one to another and towards all men. It spells brotherhood, and when once that spirit has been kindled, it disarms suspicion, it makes wars to cease, it builds the social life not upon the competition of the market but upon the eternal principles of peace, judgment, and compassion. At the Church Congress in Swansea, a few days ago, the late Lord Chancellor asserted that security of property was the basis of civilisation. There is, to my mind, something sinister in such a declaration. It may be supported by high authority. It may within certain limits not be without its measure of truth. But the secure possession of property has over and over again been the source of grave injustice, of hateful tyranny, of an un-Christian indifference to the happiness of the community. If security of property be the last word which civilisation has to say to the highest aspirations of our day, then we turn from civilisation to the message of the Bible.

Listen to Zechariah as he addresses the conscience of the age in which he lived: "Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his

brother in your heart." Here is a far deeper, a far more spiritual bond of social life than that which protects either individuals or companies in the production of wealth. Bishop Butler reminds us that it is a cardinal error to confound possession with happiness. Ruskin never said a truer word than when he declared that "a nation which desires true wealth, desires it moderately, and can therefore distribute it with kindness, and possess it with pleasure." Professor Thorold Rogers, certainly no Socialist, was an economist of high authority. In his "Six Centuries of Work and Wages" he contends that "writers have been habituated to estimate wealth as a general does military force, and are more concerned with its concentration than they are with the details of its partition." And the prophets of the Old Testament, while indeed they laid stress upon security, meant always by this idea a government that kept the simple folk by their right. By "the righteousness which exalteth a nation" they meant freedom for every member of the community to serve God undistracted by unequal conditions that cramp and fetter the humble spirit. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

Zechariah bids his contemporaries to hear the words which the Lord had cried by the former prophets in the days of Jerusalem's prosperity, when in the times of an enlarging commerce and freedom

from foreign invasion men had hardened their hearts as adamant and refused to listen to the accusing voice. He means such utterances as those of Isaiah, who had declared woe against those who were wise in their own eyes, who rose up early that they might follow strong drink, who added house to house and field to field till there was no room, who trampled the courts of God's house while the hands which brought the offerings were full of blood. Or those of Micah, who cried against such as eat the flesh of God's people, against the prophets who had naught but smooth words for those that feed them well, against the rich men of the city who in their lust for land dispossessed the yeomen of the villages, against those who built up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. It was a grave indictment that those men of God had brought against the prosperous and successful, who in the strong phrase of Zephaniah were settled upon their lees, to whom property was more sacred than the lives of men, and for whom their own advantage was a more sacred thing than the welfare of all.

So Zechariah utters his warning to those who had rebuilt the Temple, and who had once more raised the national chant. "*Ein' feste burg ist unser Gott.*" You would fain believe that God is in the midst of His people. You pray that His righteousness may go before you, and the glory of the Lord may be your rereward. Then "execute the

judgment of truth and peace, saith the Lord." Rebuild the city, but upon broader, freer, nobler lines than those which satisfied your fathers. There is no finer picture of the happy city in the whole of the world's literature than that which in a few strokes is given by this honest, sincere, loving man. There is nothing gorgeous or splendid about it. There are no palaces, banks, or halls of merchant princes—the expensive smartness of the lawn at Goodwood, the costly trappings of a Church parade, the luxury of Piccadilly or Pall Mall. It is something far more natural, more human, more tender than aught which London or Paris can show. It is a beauty like that which breathes in such a picture as Fred Walker's "Haven of Rest," and which recalls us from our artificial ambitions, our conventional views of what makes men happy, our cravings for those unnecessary things to possess which confers a cheap distinction to those simple things of life which can alone bring joy. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

To rejoice in such a picture as that is only possible for us in proportion as we forget ourselves and find the satisfaction of our spirits in the larger life of the race. A city without walls,

traversed by broad, clean ways, by the side of which the aged pensioners of the community sit with serene faces that are a benediction to the workers, and in the midst of which its young life disports itself in games that refresh the onlookers in the midst of their daily toil, is the outward expression of a society which feels its mutual bonds, and for which justice is not so much the jealous maintenance of personal rights as the free movement of all the parts in the common gladness of the whole. It is an ideal, if you will, hindered at every turn, not only or chiefly by the barriers which centuries of imperfect conditions have erected between men and women, who have dwelt apart, but by the corruptions of the human heart, which prevent the sons and daughters of a loving Father from rejoicing in that liberty in which He meant them to be free. But for those who in this beautiful house meet together in the joy of that reconciliation which Christ has won, to offer without distinction of rank or class, of age or sex, the sacrifice of a common praise before the altar in which all mankind are one, that spirit of brotherhood which knows no rights save those of dutiful service should be ever seeking to transform the life, first of Selby, then of England, then of the whole race of man into the pattern of those family relations which here in the Church we learn from Him who is the Master of the House. "Renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that

created him"—there is the vision of the new man, the transformed society, the perfect life—"where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman : but Christ is all and in all."

To rebuild the city is the call to conscience—to care for the life of the children, in whom God renews the face of the earth ; to recognise the tremendous responsibilities that belong to those to whom the Almighty Father has entrusted the serious duty of procreating the race ; to allow no claims of ownership to interfere with the task of providing wholesome houses in which during their earthly sojourn God's folk may find a fitting shelter ; to be prevented by no considerations of the private gain of individuals from diminishing the inducements to alcoholic excess ; to take order, even if it involve financial burdens, for the health of body and mind, the instruction, the enlightenment of all the people ; to cocker no class in the community, but to conserve, develop, and make the most of each man, each woman, each child ; to unbind always and everywhere the burdens which ignorance, thoughtlessness, and sin have imposed upon the brother for whom Christ died ; to renew according to knowledge that whole society which it is the will of our loving Saviour to incorporate into Himself.

For while we thank God for the emancipations which the gracious influences of His gospel have

enabled us to effect, so that in spite of all that yet remains to be done we are indeed better than our fathers ; while we praise Him for the progress that this grey old Abbey has beheld during the centuries of its silent testimony to the master truth, that it is not by bread only that man lives ; let us Churchmen refuse to be so wedded to the triumphs of the past as to fail to perceive that in an age which has witnessed unparalleled developments of material science, when human intelligence has all but conquered earth and sea and air, justice demands that we should make corresponding strides in the ordering of our social life. Let Zechariah take his place beside Haggai to-day and bid you establish the city in equity while you restore the perfect beauty of the House of Prayer. Take heed lest you incur the rebuke of Isaiah as he cries to a piety which sees no incongruity between its stately worship and its social selfishness : " Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto Me ; new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting."

To propose this great task is not to raise a battle-cry. We seek to persuade, not to contend. " Not by might nor by force, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Yet if struggle there must be, it will but repeat the experience of those ancient builders. " Every one with one of his hands wrought, and with the other held his

weapon." Last Sunday morning I celebrated the Holy Communion in one of our ancient Yorkshire churches in the North Riding. In the vestry, over the table where the sacred vessels were laid before they were carried into the church, there hangs a picture, which is intended to remind the minister of the presence of Christ as he goes in to celebrate the solemn mysteries. And beneath the picture, as a legend that brings the realities of the daily life of the community into close and intimate relation with the sacrament that consecrates the common things to God, are the words of William Blake :—

" Mine arm it shall not stay from fight,
Nor shall the sword rust in my hand,
Till I have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

That is the inspiration that we are to carry with us from the sanctuary, the strong determination with which we are to bring to God an acceptable service among such as keep holy day, the Church of England hallowing the larger life of the England that is to be, the freedom as yet undreamed of wherewith God Himself shall make us free. Be strong, both priest and people. Before you is the ampler day. For when the Lord doth build up Zion, then His glory shall appear.

SELF-SUPPRESSION AND PUBLIC SERVICE

*In the Church of the Sacred Trinity before the Mayor and Corporation of
Salford, 1910*

“ He must increase, but I must decrease.”

JOHN iii. 30.

XVII

SELF-SUPPRESSION AND PUBLIC SERVICE

THESE are the brave words of a man who could view the relations of life dispassionately because he had no axe to grind. He knew precisely not only the limitations of his opportunities but the real success of his work. He could contemplate without regret the decrease of his own importance, the setting of his own sun, the fall of the curtain upon his own strenuous activities, because he saw clearly that every man upon the earth can receive only in so far as it is given to him from above, and that, to employ the well-known figure, God buries His workmen but carries on His work. Nay, what though imprisonment and martyrdom or even oblivion were his own portion when the day's work was done. "He must increase." Messiah has come, and His har-binger may go to sleep.

When the sincere discharge of a mission has gained for a man an influence over the lives and hearts of others, when the faithful delivery of a message has established the ascendancy of

a preacher in the consciences of his hearers, there comes the subtle temptation so to identify the man with his mission, the preacher with his message, that personal authority is maintained at the expense of an unswerving fidelity to that which is the only ground of authority. With that instinctive love of life which shrinks from the hour-glass at the elbow, the skeleton at the board, we modify our mission, we adulterate our message, and for the sake of life abandon that which makes it worth the living. We are like the town councillor who, when the chill blasts of the third October are scattering the autumn leaves, shall find reasons alike satisfactory and strange for receding from the uncompromising advocacy of principles which sent him to the council board. This temptation to modify programmes, gentlemen, is one to which the minister of religion, the preacher of righteousness, is peculiarly liable. So reasonable are the disguises under which it presents itself that its victim has often trimmed his sails to catch the breeze before he has fully realised the situation in which he finds himself. But John the Baptist was not one of these. He stands before us as the type of the man who can say, "I must decrease," who has learned that there is no dishonour in failure but only in falsehood, and who can take that steady view of the world's life and work which is only possible to the honest and good heart. Many

men, whom it would be unjust to call hypocrites, who have genuinely believed in the cause which has lifted them into power, fall short of that full conviction which is content to be as a voice crying in the wilderness. Always beware of the optimism of those who have never failed. You never know how far it is belief in their cause, how far it is conceit of themselves. There was an opening for a prophet in Judæa when John began to preach his mission on the banks of the Jordan. To those familiar with the conditions under which a religious revival is likely to attain success, the circumstances of the age in which Herod, the last King of the Jews, was on the throne were altogether favourable. The times were prosperous. Jerusalem had been rebuilt with a magnificence unknown since the time of Solomon. All over the country cities and centres of civilisation were arising on the sites of older villages. There was much trade and not inconsiderable wealth. It was just at such periods in the history of the Hebrews that prophets had arisen before. It is under similar conditions, as, for example, in the comfortable England of the eighteenth century, that religious movements have taken place since. The *mise en scène*, if we may be excused the phrase, left nothing to be desired. It might have been said, it doubtless was said, that the young preacher was very careful to arrange the accessories of a successful perform-

ance—the long hair, always attractive ; the ascetic life—no wine, locusts, and wild honey—how interesting ! the cassock of camels' hair with leathern girdle—what a fascinating and unconventional figure ! You would think for all the world that it was Elijah. And then the place where the wonderful sermons were delivered—not in a stuffy synagogue in Jerusalem with fine ladies fighting for seats and people standing in a queue for hours before the doors were open. Nothing so conventional as that. Down in the deep glen where the Jordan flowed darkly over its rocks and the weird cliffs hung high on either hand, the full clear voice which called men to repentance rang out upon the still air. Have you been to hear John ? Have you seen him baptize ? Such a thrilling experience ! Let us make up a party and go. It became as much the correct thing for Jerusalem to go out to Jordan in the days of John as it is for Manchester to attend the Hallé concert on a Thursday night. Soldiers, Pharisees, tax-gatherers, representatives of every class in the city, flocked out of its eastern gate to make the journey to Jordan-side and hear the prophet. Some were superior and went to criticise. Others were touched in their conscience and inquired what they should do. With all alike John dealt straightly. No doubt a mighty impression was made.

Now have we not sufficient experience of life to

recognise how the conspicuous success which had attended the sermons would become a temptation to the preacher? Take a man, I will not say of low morality, but of average, or let us say of more than average character, a rector or an alderman of this borough, and put him in such a position as that which the Baptist had attained. Should we not, when we had tasted of the sweets of ascendancy, be only too ready to regard our success as attesting the truth of our message, to hold that success and that message as interchangeable, to work for personal victory as the necessary condition of establishing the truth? I must increase if the cause for which I stand is to increase. True, I do not regard myself as God's Messiah. I know perfectly well that there cometh after me one who is preferred before me. But that is something very different from really believing that it is your own destiny to decrease. The herald of the Redeemer is surely he to whom it shall be given to introduce Him to the world, not a voice that shall proclaim Him in a desert of distrust and a wilderness of misunderstanding. God is great and Muhammed is and ever shall be His prophet. Believe in the one and you must accept the other. Extinguish the prophet and you banish God. So we should begin to substitute diplomacy for direct action, tact for truth, caution for courage.

Then come those crucial moments in our career

which test the stuff of which we are made. Do you not see, you Baptist, that the cause of eternal truth, the development of a Divine purpose depends upon your retaining that position of influence which already has been a powerful instrument of reform? You must not waste the opportunity which your genius has created by hasty denunciation of those who have it in their power to break off your beneficent career. Deal softly with the tetrarch. Win his confidence, accept his invitations, and who knows that without offence to any one the occasion may present itself to get in a suggestive word that may mitigate the scandal we all deplore without wrecking a ministry on which our hopes are set? That is the sort of way in which we can imagine a disciple of St. John, whose devotion to the man exceeded his belief in the message, arguing with his master in the attempt to avert a tragic ending to a noble witness. But if representations like these were made, as well might be, to the man of clear vision and undaunted faith, they were met with a testimony as fatal as it was unequivocal. "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." That was the end. The prison doors closed on the faithful martyr, nor were they again opened till his bleeding head was carried to the bower of Philip's adulterous spouse, and the body, a piteous mockery of their high hopes, was given to his disciples for burial.

Now it is all very well for us who view these events in their historical perspective to see that the work of the Baptist was indeed fulfilled, when, having preached repentance to the men of his time, his prophetic insight fastened upon the youthful Jesus of Nazareth as He of whom in some sense he was the harbinger. "If ye will receive it," were the words of Christ Himself to the inner circle of His followers, "this is Elijah which was for to come." From such a vantage-ground as that which the students of a past age possess, it is easy to trace sequences and connections which can only be perceived by exceptional insight at the time of their occurrence. A retiring mayor at the conclusion of his year of service invests his successor with the official chain, assured that with this symbol he hands on the traditions of the borough to one who will take up and carry on the work. "The king is dead—long live the king!" is a formula which all can understand. But a succession in the providence of God is something very different from a succession in the arrangements of men. It must often mean that those who see the close of their own usefulness, the passing away of their own opportunities, are ignorant how or by what method the principles for which they have loyally striven will be carried forward to a victorious issue. How often has it happened that from one, and he as good as dead, there has sprung a seed like the

sand of the sea for multitude? Is it wonderful that in a world where failure, disappointment, and defeat are the common experience of mankind those who against hope have believed in hope are not the more numerous part of the human race? That the developing purpose which often dimly enough we discern in the onward progress of the world is destined to increase, to widen, and at length be perfected, while we who would fain carry the banner to victory must decrease, dwindle and die, as our testimony is added, our warfare accomplished, and our work done, is a conviction which is hardly mastered. Happy the man that has achieved it. There will be no hay or stubble, no, nor yet wood in the structure which he rears on the sure foundation. His service will be pure gold.

And is it not such servants as I have endeavoured to depict that are needed to prepare the way of the Lord in these towns and cities where God's children live and work? Mayor's Sunday, on which year by year a new occupant of the chief magistracy brings with him his colleagues and associates in office to hear a sermon in the oldest church of this borough, reminds us afresh that the workmen change while the work grows. It must increase, while they must decrease. If our chosen rulers are to be men who without distraction shall set themselves to realise in municipal government the noblest ideals and the deepest

convictions, they must, like John the Baptist, have no axes to grind. Honesty of purpose and singleness of aim will so purify their labours that even in dark and dirty November they will present themselves to their fellow-citizens as true candidates, men who have kept their garments white. The polls will have no anxieties for those who are careful only that cherished convictions may be exemplified in municipal policies and who are content to use the opportunities which are accorded to them, no matter whether they be long or short, to give such substantial reality to their dreams as the time and the occasion permit. Nothing but this sincerity will give the steadiness of view which caused the Hebrew prophet to exclaim, "The just shall live by faith." "For the vision is for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry." It does not matter whether you and I are placed by others in the position which enables us to carry into effect those schemes of social improvement which we see to be needed by the community in which our lot is cast. It does not matter whether at the next election some faithful public servant is deprived through the caprice of the electorate of the place which he has occupied in the control and management of municipal affairs. The river may wind, may double upon itself like the Irwell at Salford, but at last it flows into the sea. What does matter is that we should

give constant and unflinching testimony to the path along which in our heart and conscience we are convinced that true progress lies. What does matter is that we should be so deeply impressed with the righteousness of the cause which we represent as to be assured that no man is indispensable to its final triumph. What does matter is that we should buy the truth and sell it not. We must have visions of the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, if the day is to come when we can contemplate with equanimity the sight of our earthly cities full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. We must fix our eyes steadily upon the increasing purpose which presides over the march of human affairs, and even when it is checked and thwarted persistently finds new channels through which to reach its end. Christian optimism will always believe that failures, where there has been no unfaithfulness, are but moments in a success which is wider than our brief day can compass or comprehend. There is only one spirit in which we can courageously act upon this great conviction. It is expressed in the words of John the Baptist: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

And will not this spirit of self-effacement and true service help us in approaching those serious questions of public policy which, as a community, we are called to face? This is not the place nor

am I, lately come among you and honoured beyond my deserts by the invitation to address you this morning, the proper person to express an opinion with regard to those relations which are in the future to exist between this royal and ancient borough and the great modern city under the shadow of which we are gathered here this morning. Such relations, whatever they may be, must always, as it would seem to me, make no ordinary demands upon the public spirit of the burgesses of Salford, for there is a sense in which it has long been true that our neighbours must increase, while we must decrease. That is not to say that Manchester's success is Salford's failure, or even that our extinction as a separate municipality, if indeed that be the end to which the course of affairs is shaping, would mean aught but an enrichment of the life of two communities. But if there is to be a true, a wise, a lasting solution of this problem of local government, that our geographical connection with the great city, of which to the eye of a stranger we are already a part, inevitably forces upon us, we of the smaller community, and more especially those whom we have entrusted with the management of our affairs, will need a high sense of public duty, a determination to consider the common good rather than our own dignity, a due recognition of our limitations, and a heart of sacrifice.

May God grant to us all, to our aldermen and

councillors, and to you especially, Mr. Mayor, to whom this day we give our felicitations and our prayers, a right judgment in all things, and the grace and comfort of His Holy Spirit.

THE CONVERGENT WITNESS

In Lincoln Cathedral at the Trinity Ordination, 1911

“There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood : and the three agree in one.”

1 JOHN v. 8.

XVIII

THE CONVERGENT WITNESS

THERE can be no question, my brothers, you who are about to be admitted this day to the ministry of God's Word and Sacraments, that the work which you and I have to do is definite, precise, and clear. We are not given our place in the ranks of the Christian clergy to set a high tone, or exercise a spiritual influence, or do all the good we can according to our lights, but to bear witness to the supreme fact that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is come in the flesh, and that He is the propitiation for the world's sins.

That witness must reflect and reproduce the threefold testimony which, the First Epistle of St. John declares, converges towards one point and promotes a single purpose. There is nothing vague, indeterminate, or uncertain about the view of life or the power of living which we set before our fellow-men. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Now there are some people who are so occupied

with the thought of the Spirit that they seem entirely to forget that the Spirit with whom we Christians have to do is the Spirit of the historical Jesus, and that it is to Jesus and none other that He testifies. Theirs is the sort of Churchmanship which is apt to become like the river Dee, very broad and very shallow. What the Spirit, who is properly called Holy, searches is the deep things of God, the mystery into which angels have desired to look, the manifestation of the Eternal which reached its consummation on Calvary.

Others there are whose Catholic orthodoxy seems almost like the condition of those of whom we read in the 19th of Acts, that they had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. They are great on creeds and sacraments. Their churchmanship may be compared to the hard, rocky peaks which stand out against the rare atmosphere of Switzerland, very high and very dry. But it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

From pastors of either type, men who have not experienced for themselves the convergent witness of the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, may the good Lord deliver us.

It is perfectly clear that St. John is one of those people who observe closely, and who in consequence never lose sight of the untold importance of facts, and of all the facts. You cannot read his account of the Crucifixion without becoming aware

of the intense realism of his nature. He stands beneath the cross with both eyes wide open. He sees the hard wood and the torn body stretched upon it. He sees the blue spear uplifted till the sharp point pierces the white flesh. He beholds the stream that issues from the wound. It is blood and water. Not water only, but water and blood.

Already he had grasped the great truth that the Cross of Calvary is the central fact of the world's story. This is made evident by the citation from the ritual of the Passover with which he illuminates for us the apparently unimportant incident which went before the piercing of the side. "They brake not His legs." This was the provision that applied to every victim which on that solemn Good Friday was slain for the paschal feast. And three years before his own experience of the Saviour had begun with the testimony of the Baptist, too little understood when first spoken of the great Neophyte, fresh from His baptism in Jordan, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Now the disciple whom Jesus loved knew by an experience more wonderful than any that had hitherto been granted to mortal man, that He who had declared to Nicodemus that except a man be born of water he cannot enter the kingdom, could only complete His redemption of humanity if He came not by water only but by blood. The water must redden into wine. The

baptism of righteousness must become the cup of sacrifice. Cleansing was impossible apart from forgiveness; purification was unattainable apart from pain. Taking them both together, the water and the blood, the twin facts of the gospel, the entrance into the world of Jesus, who renews humanity, the elevation on the cross of the Son of Man who redeems it, are the indispensable witness of history to the love of God, which is not only represented but actually conveyed to our suffering and sin-stained race through an external, actual, visible work. If St. John is certain that God is Love, he is no less certain that "herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him."

But we have not by any means exhausted this writer's meaning if we confine the record which bears witness to Christ the Redeemer to those facts of the evangelical narrative which are embodied in the language of the Apostles' Creed. His experience was a much wider one than this. He belonged to a society whose members had all been admitted by a baptism of water into the fellowship of one body, and who week by week shared a common cup, at the institution of which Christ had Himself pronounced the words, "This is My blood." The testimony of outward facts was not finished when Jesus came up from the waters of Jordan, or even when His body was taken down

from the cross and laid in the sepulchre. The report which the Gospels contain is not the whole of the external witness to the Son of Man. It was not a king but a kingdom that was proclaimed in Galilee. And that kingdom still comes by water and blood. Its borders are still extended by water, its fellowship still cemented in blood. The Sacraments by their form still witness to a regenerate humanity, still proclaim that death through which it lives.

Now, my brothers of the ministry—nay, I would extend the appeal to every member of this Christian congregation—if our religion, our witness for God, is to be anything like that of the author of this Epistle, it must first of all be definite. It must not be mystical in any sense that is contrasted with matter of fact. By the term definite I do not indicate for one moment that narrow dependence upon dogmatic statement which substitutes beliefs for faith, and which seems to regard the heterogeneous population of this country merely as the raw material, which it is the duty of the priest to put into the ecclesiastical machine at one end and to turn out complete Catholics at the other. But definition does mean the possession of outline, and the possession of outline means material embodiment. You cannot have the rapturous song which greets the ear in your Lincolnshire meadows without the little bunch of dirty brown feathers that trembles above

you in the June sky. No more can you divorce the Christian spirit from the facts that have given it being. Men who are alive on the one hand to the conditions of all human experience and on the other to the reality of the Christian message will never be tempted through fear of preaching a mechanical salvation to substitute vague vapourings about the love of God or the ideals of Jesus or the spirit of Christianity for the acknowledgment of a sacramental Church, the crucifixion of a Divine Redeemer, and God's gift to our suffering and sinful race of His only-begotten Son. Such a gospel as this is something far more vital than "truth embodied in a tale"; it is life manifested in fact. The message of salvation can enter in at lowly doors only because it is by the lowly door of actual, living history that God has Himself come into the world.

But when this has been said we must turn back at once to that first line of convergent testimony, which in our solicitude for the outward tokens of our faith we have almost seemed to disparage, but which is, after all, not only the first but the most fundamental of them all. "The Spirit beareth witness."

Look carefully at the passage before us and you will see at once that this is so. The two witnesses of which we have been thinking are not parallel and independent sources of testimony. They are particular forms, in which the mighty

Demonstrator Himself brings home the conviction that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. "It is the Spirit," says St. John, "that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." Is not a good deal of the formalism with which we Churchmen are often charged, and not always entirely without justification, due to the fact that we are inclined so to fix our mind on the body which is the bearer, the sacraments which are pledges of the Spirit as almost to forget that the Spirit is the Life. The emphasis of our Lord's teaching, as the Fourth Gospel preserves it, is precisely the reverse. He speaks of a new birth of water and of the Spirit. But as the great teaching unfolds itself it is the former, not the latter, which passes out of sight, and at the end of the discourse we find Him speaking simply of "every one that is born of the Spirit." The same is true of the corresponding teaching in the sixth chapter on the subject of the flesh and blood of Christ. Language is used which shocks and bewilders the minds even of many who hitherto had claimed to be disciples of Jesus, and who now exclaim, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Of the answer which they received I have already reminded you. "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth."

And how do you suppose our Lord wishes us to understand what He says concerning the Spirit? He cannot intend us to believe that the body is

unimportant. If He had meant this He would have said, "The Spirit is life," whereas what He actually does say is that the Spirit gives life. To what? There can be but one answer. It is the body which it is the function of spirit to quicken. But who of us does not know that health is only perfect when we are able to forget the solid flesh, when we are so absorbed in the joy of living that we seem to tread on air? That is surely a true analogy of the spiritual life. The beautiful freedom of the Holy Ghost is impaired and spoiled if we can only think of Him in relation to creeds and ordinances, to churches and sacraments, magnifying the gear at the expense of the power, losing the joy of the communion of the body in the painful contemplation of its structure. Christendom would be reunited in one undivided fellowship in our day, and that without the loss of a single atom of truth, if only we Christians would fix our minds steadily and persistently on Him who is the personal life, the living principle of unity, in the body of believers, the Holy and Eternal Spirit. Nor would our Church life, with its ministrations of baptism, of confirmation, of ordination, of the Eucharist itself, be less of a reality if we were less anxious to define in accurate language the exact effect, the precise gift which is attached to each one of these cherished institutions and more ready to magnify like the first disciples the River of Water of Life which proceeds out of the throne of

God and of the Lamb. Whatever may be true of children, let us be sure of this, that the adult Christian, who can only describe in the words of a catechism what it is to be a baptized member of Christ, has already lost, if indeed he has ever known, the witness of experience which St. John tells us is the primary assurance of the believer. It is because we do not believe in the Holy Spirit that we stumble at that confident faith which is like the joy of a perpetual summer, when the valleys stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing. I do not want to see less dignity, less repose, less order in the celebration of our stately ritual, but I do say that we want more of the spirit of the early Methodists in the congregations which gather in our parish churches. What a grand, but what an astonishing thing it would be if the parson's sermon were sometimes punctuated from the squire's pew with a "Praise the Lord"! That would mean a parson who was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, a squire who thought more of prayer than of partridges. What we want is not so much better Catholics as more primitive Christians, men and women who will reflect the witness, because they know the power, of the Holy Spirit.

What a flame our Christianity would become if only we lit our torches at the central fire! It would go leaping through our great cities and our country hamlets, withering the evil, consuming

the sin, purifying our land of its pestilent problems. Brewers would empty their vats never to refill them. Dwellings unfit for the children of God would disappear from festering slum and neglected village. The example of Barnabas would no longer seem quixotic, nor would any court the fate of Ananias by a fraudulent income-tax return. Private property would be subordinated to the common life. Earnest reformers would spring as from the soil, eager to strike off fetters, to banish privilege, to proclaim liberty. Men would become witnesses in the fire. "Play the man, master Ridley; we shall this day light in England such a candle as shall never be put out."

And if the homeland would be transfigured by the burning Presence, what of the regions beyond? The magnificent challenge of the students in our universities—"The world for Christ in our day"—could not long remain an unrealised ideal. This Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in all the world for a witness if the greatest of all the witnesses were but given the place that is rightly His in the thought and work of the Christian Church to-day.

Sound bodies, sane minds, hallowed lips, sanctified lives—these are the endowment which belongs of right and will be granted in experience to all who will allow themselves to be led by the Spirit of God, and so to become sons of God.

For the witness of the Spirit precedes all other

testimony to the crucified, risen, and exalted Christ. Peter cannot preach to the crowds who assemble in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, until the presence and power of the exalted Saviour has first been manifested in demonstration of the Spirit. Men may have seen the water and the blood, but they can only proclaim its liberating, purifying power when the testimony of the published message has its primary support in the evidence of the Paraclete. "When He is come," says the Saviour Himself, "He shall testify of Me." Then and then only "shall ye also bear witness" as those who have been "with Me."

Thus the testimony of the Christian preacher will become the reflex of the witness of the Spirit. It will be supported by the energising power which manifests the abiding presence of Him in whom all things have their system, and which entering into holy souls makes them sons of God and prophets. The world will be convicted of sin. The penitent will gather round the cross of the Redeemer. The thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. Of you too, as once again you tell the story of a disciple's faith, men will take knowledge that you have been with Jesus, and all that look steadfastly upon you, though you know not that your countenance shines, will see your faces as they had been the faces of angels.



THE CLERGY AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

*In Leeds Parish Church on the Third Sunday in Advent, 1909, before the
Parliamentary Election.*

“Son of man, I have set thee for a watchman unto the house of Israel.”

EZEKIEL xxxiii. 7

XIX

THE CLERGY AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

THE prophets of the Old Testament were *Domini canes*—the watchdogs of the Lord. They were not ethical teachers, announcing the general laws of God's moral government without respect to special conjunctions of circumstances and particular opportunities of service. They spoke to conscience in the crises of a nation's history. The whole field of religious and social progress was their province. They were hampered by no nice distinctions in the faithful delivery of their message. No voices were more spiritual, but none were more practical. They often gave offence. We are tempted to imagine that because their work belongs to the 'Bible they must therefore have concerned themselves with questions that were purely religious. There is no greater mistake. If their religion was pure, it was also applied, applied not only to private but to public affairs. Some of Isaiah's most notable utterances concerned an alliance with Egypt, which agitated the Hebrew statesmen of his time. Jeremiah's

ministry would be no more tolerated in Leeds than it was in Jerusalem. Remember that these men spoke as prophets. They had a message for Churchmen, not a political theory to expound to their fellow-citizens. They spoke, as we should say, not from the platform but from the pulpit. They could not have conceived of themselves as honourably associated with either political party. But I cannot imagine Jeremiah sitting on the fence on the eve of a General Election, or Isaiah retiring behind colourless advice and elusive phrases at the time of a dissolution of Parliament. "Son of man, I have set thee for a watchman."

My object this morning is not to claim for the modern clergy the right to intervene in political warfare. When I reflect upon what the clergy of the Church of England are at this moment I should contemplate such a prospect with an anxiety bordering on dismay. But I do wish to assert with some emphasis that we are in danger of forgetting that side of the Christian ministry which is always prominent in times of reformation, which is forcibly presented in the collect for the day, and which will alone enable the clergy to respond to new thoughts, new needs, and new aspirations, such as those which are overwhelmingly present in the swift expansion of the present age. When as this morning you pray for the Church's ministers, desire earnestly on their behalf the greater gifts, but rather that they should prophesy.

Now you cannot abridge the liberty of prophesying. You cannot define the limits within which this great gift of the Spirit may be exercised. You cannot mark off a territory which may not be invaded by him who speaks in the name of the Lord. If you do, then be sure that this forbidden ground will at once become the Alsatia in which the forces of evil will entrench themselves. When I said just now that I should deprecate the interference of the clergy in politics, this was not because there is any inherent reason why they should not do so. What I may resent in the Vicar of Little Puddletown I dare not criticise in an apostle. But you say that, whatever the representatives of religion in the Old Testament may have done, it is certain that the apostles confined themselves to purely spiritual concerns. Are you sure? In the first place you must remember that if Leeds were Corinth, St. Paul would be preaching, not in this Parish Church, but in some private room, like that in Great George Street where the Christadelphians meet with a select dancing academy above them and a spice shop below. That Christian Church in Corinth for which the apostle makes the magnificent claim to universal sovereignty was a handful of unnoticed folk in a great commercial city. His opportunities therefore were not ours. But I turn to the Epistle of St. James, that writing in which we read of the widows and orphans, of which in still recent controversies a use was made the most

perverse that ever I saw, and there I find a passage that might have been taken bodily out of Amos or Isaiah :—

“Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you.”

I wonder what the state of the collection was on the morning when those words were first read in a Christian congregation. Do you think that it cost St. James nothing to write those brave words? Are they stage villains who are here described? No, they were respectable people.

But what I want you chiefly to notice is that here we have that grand old vein of prophecy, deeply spiritual, broadly human, impressively true to conscience, fearless of invading the practical concerns of life, passing from its ancient Hebrew environment into the circle of the Christian fellow-

ship. That was the badge of the Kingdom of God. That spirit of the prophets, which the Hebrew could at once recognise, the spirit that inspired Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, had reappeared in the society of Jesus. Their sons and their daughters prophesied. "The goodly fellowship of the prophets," as it was once understood, was not closed when the last page of the Old Testament was finished. The roll did not end with Malachi, but was now continued into Christian times, and included a Paul, an Agabus, an Ignatius, a Polycarp, a great unnumbered multitude of Christian men, on whom the gift had been bestowed, and who spake, like those of old, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Time would fail to tell—what every student of Church History knows—how the exercise of this gift, the presence of which is clearly recognisable to every intelligent reader of the New Testament, was gradually replaced by the teaching function of the clergy. Difficulties arose, into which we need not enter, to mar and hinder this manifestation of the Spirit, long cherished, nevertheless, as the most wonderful of Christian gifts. But the point I wish you to remember is this, that Christian preaching as we know it arose out of the gradual transference of the function of teaching from the gifted prophets to the office-bearers of the congregation. Many of these in the first ages were, as is well known, also prophets, which did much to

make the transition easy. If we may not claim for the ordained ministers of the Word in virtue of their office the same measure of inspiration as the conscience of the first Christians acknowledged in the voices of the prophets, we are bound to point to the origin of their teaching function as requiring a freedom in the discharge of a solemn duty which shall correspond to the largeness of that Word, which, even when preached by ambassadors in bonds, can itself never be bound.

The pulpit has one function, and one function only, the appeal of Christian truth to the Christian conscience. If this is to be real amid the current of surging interests that from day to day make up the real life of men upon the earth, the preacher, who has once understood his calling, cannot consent to dwell in the realm of platitudinous generalities, or to sit upon the fence and watch the struggle of conflicting principles in the game of practical life. It is always what in logic is called the minor premiss that matters in human affairs, not What is just? but What does justice require me to do? A nicely balanced neutrality in public matters can mean only one thing, that Christ has no word to say about politics. It can have only one result, namely, to throw the influence of the Church, such as it is, into the scale of that party which for the time being is less affected

in its aims by moral and spiritual considerations. God forbid that I should seem to argue in favour of the intervention of the priest in politics. Few influences are more sinister, few will the Englishman be less likely to brook. Banish the priest from politics, but banish him also from the pulpit! Nothing is more foreign to the whole genius of Christianity than the ecclesiastic, be he pope or padre, who claims an official authority to compel conscience in the exercise of personal responsibility. The burden of the ancient prophet was always a testimony, the witness of a character which, submitting itself to the sovereignty of God, saw the life of the people among whom it dwelt transfigured by the light to which its own spiritual life was surrendered. The prophets made mistakes. It is only abysmal ignorance that is infallible. They had their treasure in earthen vessels. Nevertheless, God spoke by the prophets, and all ages have recognised the depth and reality of their message. And oh! that men might be able to feel that there was some at least of the same sincerity and conviction about some of the words that are spoken here.

I have said that the Christian pulpit must be free. But there is one note that the congregation must demand in every sermon which is delivered in the name of Jesus. It is the note which transforms an utterance, mistaken though

it may be in some of its applications, into a Christian message. It is quite certain that in the days of the early Church there were many of those prophets to whom I refer who did not speak in the name of the Lord. The New Testament itself bears abundant witness to this fact. The second Epistle to Timothy suggests what we know from other sources to be the case, that the main chance, which is a root of all kinds of evil, not infrequently vitiated the teaching of some of them. But there was one test with which the members of the Christian Church were bidden again and again to try the Spirits. "No man," says St. Paul, "speaking in the Spirit calleth Jesus accursed." "Every spirit," says St. John, "that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." "There shall be false teachers," we read in the lesson last Sunday morning, "who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them." In every age it is the evangelical ring that properly belongs to the Christian sermon. The ministry which we hold is the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors of God, who in Christ crucified is reconciling the world unto Himself. It is not the field to which the preacher's conscience leads him—it may be personal, social, industrial, municipal, or political life. It may involve domestic, civil, international relations. No severe line can be

drawn between these interlacing strands in the complex web of humanity, and it is the wide range of interests that his profession involves which is the glory and fascination of the preacher's career—it is not the character of the field, but unbroken fidelity to the everlasting gospel which is the touchstone of the pulpit. When I look abroad over the Church of England to-day, I ask myself with all seriousness whether the admitted dullness of the Anglican pulpit be not due, not to the incapacity of the clergy, but to the loss of that spiritual fire which enables the servant of Christ to illuminate the new thoughts which from all sides are streaming into the minds of men and women with the steady flame of the Cross. We cannot afford to sympathise with the new ideas and to believe in the future if we have lost our conviction that the simple gospel, the power of which we know from a personal and inward experience, can be trusted to consecrate the New Age. There is nothing more pitiable than the sight of an archdeacon buttoning himself up in his gaitered conventionality while the rising tide is already swirling about his feet. Give us an evangelical pulpit and a human clergy, and against the Church of England the gates of hell shall not prevail.

But I confess I am oppressed when I see the nervous anxiety of the bishops lest the clergy

in their sermons should ruffle the surface of the political waters. We are told, as though this were an end of controversy, that it is contrary to the practice of the Church of England. It were a poor survey of Anglican preaching that should forget the sermons of honest Hugh Latimer. Were they inoffensive in this matter? If Wyclif has been claimed as the Morning Star of the Reformation, he has also been classed as a herald of Socialism. Archbishop Laud may not commend himself as a statesman; he was at least a devoted Churchman. Seven only of his sermons survive. I have read them all. They are all political, and the motive of one was a House of Commons that refused supplies.

But, however this may be, there is hardly any public question, among those which in the opinion of at least some of our right reverend fathers we are permitted to handle, which can be detached from the polemics of political parties. I protest against misrule on the Congo. I am embroiling the Foreign Office. I touch on civics. Who that calls himself a social reformer would not immediately find himself in conflict with influences that at this moment dominate the Councils of London or of Leeds? I deal with the legislative aspects of temperance. I am applauded in the *Mercury*, denounced in the *Post*. To make these exceptions—and no one agrees more heartily than I that the Christian

preacher cannot evade these problems—is to concede the whole. But I observe a tendency, which I cannot too earnestly deprecate, to treat education and Welsh Establishment as subjects in which even under stress of an election the clergy may break silence because they involve our religious duty as Churchmen. I will not urge that in the mind of an increasing body of Churchmen, of whom I am one, the freedom which the Christian Society ought to possess, the unfettered activity of the Spirit, and the full realisation of the Headship of Jesus Christ, point inevitably to the breaking of the fetters which bind the Church to an outworn feudalism and are collectively called “establishment.” Nor do I presume for one moment to say how, at a crisis in which the issues are probably more serious than at any period within the recollection of most of us, the vote of the individual Churchman should be cast. But this I do say, that to tell Churchmen that they cannot support any candidate who will not pledge himself to the policy of the National Society or to maintain the Establishment in Wales is to seek to bind the Church to the chariot wheels of a political party, all the more serious because it is made under cover of a strict political neutrality. “Here,” writes one of our most scholarly clergy of the diocese to which he belongs, “all the influence of our bishop and his diocesan organisa-

tions are placed at the disposal of the Tory Caucus, of course in the name of Church Defence, and on strictly non-political principles." And it was only the other day that I observed how a marchioness, wife of one of the very men who have been prominent mouthpieces of their party in the House of Lords, was endeavouring, and I think not unsuccessfully, to procure the formulation of a set of Church questions to be put to candidates for Parliament in the diocese of Durham, the issue of which could not well be in doubt. I have no desire, I should repudiate with all my might the bare suggestion, to use the pulpit for political purposes, or, under the cloak of religious exhortation, to play the game of a political party. I have publicly opposed and I have publicly supported the policy of his Majesty's present advisers. With parties as such I do not wish to be associated. I should risk that very independence which is beyond price to a minister of the Word. Let us attack no party nor impugn the sincerity of its members. But he does an ill service to the Church of England who will attach its interests to the fortunes of one. He imperils the liberty of prophesying who shall seek to exempt any department of public activity for the criticism of the Christian conscience.

You have much need to pray for your clergy. This is, as you have heard, the Ember Week.

The services of the day turn our thoughts in that direction. For well nigh ten years I have been entrusted with the great responsibility, too high, as I well know, for one who cannot but acknowledge his own inadequacy, of preparing men for the pastorate of the Christian Church. There must be now nearly three hundred men who have passed into the ministry in the training of whom I have been allowed to share, whether in Edinburgh or Leeds. A few are already with God. The rest are at work in England, in Ireland, on the dear soil of Scotland, or the plains of India; in the towns of Canada and New Zealand, on the African veldt, in the backwoods of Australia, in the vast country of China, in the regions of the Pacific. What a wonderful and changeful life is represented by this scattered band! What, think you, should we pray that these men, and the whole clergy of our wide communion, should increasingly become? This should be our prayer: May they believe with all their hearts that the gospel of reconciliation with the Father through Jesus Christ the Son, who is their light and their salvation, is the need of every man and proclaim it faithfully to all the nations. May they have broad and open minds to receive truth from every quarter, and to follow it whithersoever it may lead. May nothing of what is human be outside the range of their sympa-

thies, nor unwelcomed by their ready mind. Let the soft influences of the wealthy never deflect them from the testimony of truth. May they be content to become "a voice crying in the wilderness" while yet they never lose a keen and eager interest in the fascinating problems of this multitudinous world. Let them never cease to learn while they are ever apt to teach; that the Lord when He cometh may find them with lamps burning and loins girt. May the summons of the Master alone dismiss them from their faithful watch. Then *requiescant in pace.*

F.—THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH

MISSIONS AND APOCALYPSE

In Manchester Cathedral during Advent, 1910.

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations.”

ST. MATTHEW xxiv. 14.

XX

MISSIONS AND APOCALYPSE

THERE is a great difference, but a difference to which sufficient attention is rarely paid, between the proclamation of the kingdom among all the nations and the conversion of the world. There are some verses frequently sung at missionary meetings—I heard them only last Monday at the annual gathering of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Manchester—which tell how—

“God is working His purpose out and the time will surely be

When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.”

Nothing could more fully express the burden both of Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles than the message of that hymn. It inspires us with the noble desire to be fellow-workers with God in the accomplishment of His great design. But nothing is easier than to mistake the place which our efforts are meant to take in the development of the Eternal Purpose. The duty with

which we are intrusted may be so misunderstood, that we virtually exchange the promise to which God's honour is pledged for a statement the rash self-sufficiency of which will be the measure of the final disillusionment, that it is we that are working God's purpose out, till—

“The time which shall surely be,
When the whole round world is converted to Christ
from the East to the Western Sea.”

These two versions of the popular hymn, the words that Alfred Ainger wrote and the paraphrase on which I have ventured, are far from being coincident in their meaning. That patient hope which, when the waves are roaring and men's hearts fail them for fear, sees the Lord coming on the waters, is only possible to those who know their Bibles.

St. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles. No more enthusiastic missionary than he. I am sure if he had lived in our day he would have had a map of both hemispheres with the splendid legend inscribed above it, “The world for Christ in this generation.” Apostleship of the Gentiles meant nothing less than a world missionary campaign, such as St. Paul undertook at the bidding of the Risen Master and carried to a glorious issue. But St. Paul never expected to convert the world. I say it deliberately. St. Paul never expected to convert the world, nor did he expect those who

succeeded him in the ministry of the reconciling gospel to fill up the gaps in evangelisation which he had been obliged to leave. He did indeed look forward to the end, to what the hymn calls "the time that shall surely be." But listen to the warning which he addresses to his son Timothy. "Know this," he says with all the solemnity of a prophet, "that in the last days grievous times shall come. . . . Men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, holding a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." It matters very little whether St. Paul believed in the approaching end of the age or whether, like the author of second Peter, he had grasped the truth that "a thousand years are with the Lord as one day." The latter is the more probable. But prophetic insight has nothing to do with time, nor is apocalypse antiquated by the lapse of years. What he saw was not a converted world but a secularised Church. If it be said that these are the jaundiced utterances of a disappointed old man, turn to the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, written in the heyday of his missionary journeys, when it is not improbable that, even as men count, he supposed that the time was short. "It will not be," he says, "except the falling away come first." Observe, he speaks of "the falling away"; no casual waning of Christian faith, such as might be expected in the history of any developing society, but an

alienation from the fellowship that might fairly be anticipated as the apostasy. The whole passage is one of those mystic utterances, which possess an absorbing fascination for a few minds but are eerie and scarcely intelligible to most, belonging to that primitive and prophetic age of the Christian Society when, as its members were convinced, the Spirit spoke expressly. One point at least the dullest cannot miss. St. Paul looked forward to a manifestation of wickedness, of a mystery of lawlessness, in violent and direct opposition to the crucified Son of God.

In the attitude of this great Christian apostle there is a very close correspondence with the temper of the ancient prophets of Israel who looked forward to great and terrible days of the Lord and to the salvation of remnants. Like them, he believed with unfaltering faith that God in the march of history was working out a purpose older than the ages themselves by ways that are not our ways, by thoughts higher than our thoughts. But there is something wholly unlike the expectation with which a world that judges by the standards of superficial success, and which will not stay to examine the origins of the Christian religion, credits those who preach the gospel. "Look at your failures" is the taunt of which Christians by the listless support which they give to the work of evangelisation half allow the force. Look at the effort, the treasure, the lives that are

expended upon a result wholly incommensurate with the outlay. Are the nations which by courtesy are called Christendom really permeated by a belief in Jesus Christ? We demand in these days efficiency. Judged by any standard that would commend itself to the readers of the *Daily Mail*, can the Christian faith be honestly regarded as one of the efficient institutions, the going concerns of modern civilised life? Is there not something quixotic in the enthusiasm of a few ardent Christians which maintains societies for the conversion of China and India, of an Africa that is far too backward to appreciate, of a Japan that is far too clever to accept the religion of Jesus?

Now observe that this theory of Christian missions is based entirely upon a view of their objective which, as we have seen, was far enough from the mind of St. Paul, and which cannot be shown to have inspired the activities of a single member of that apostolic band who received the commission to preach the gospel to all the nations. Let us hasten to add that it is remote from the mind of Him who was Himself the author of that commission and the subject of that gospel. "This gospel of the kingdom," He says, "shall first be preached for a testimony," not only in Jerusalem and Galilee, but "among all the nations, and then," when that message has been proclaimed, when by faithful martyrs that witness has been given, "then shall the end come." That the words are

variously reported in the several Gospels is of small importance. "The gospel must first be preached unto all the nations" is the reading of St. Mark. No reference to the testimony. It may then after all be a successful gospel of which Jesus speaks. No, the immediate context makes it abundantly clear that public rejection is to accompany the delivery of the message. "Before governors and kings shall ye stand for My sake." And it is here that the Marcan narrative adds the phrase, "for a testimony unto them." One of the most important developments of the current criticism of the New Testament, discernible among Germans and Modernists alike, is the extraordinary weight now attached to what is called the apocalyptic element in Christ's teaching—that is, to those utterances of His which bear a close resemblance to the Book of the Revelation. No doubt many unwise and inaccurate statements are made; for critics are apt to play with a novel theory like children with a new toy. But they are giving us back a part of the gospel neglected by the bulk of believers for many centuries, to the great detriment of the community of Christ. It is when we read what Jesus Himself says concerning the final issues of redemption that we see Him to have entertained no illusions as to the success of His message. As surely as the proclamation of the Messiah, the witness of the Baptist, the testimony of the prophets was to issue, not in a crown but

in the Cross, so surely would the preaching of the gospel among all the nations be attended by similar evidences of defeat. Was the picture of the last days, which St. Paul draws, the offspring of his own imagination? On the contrary, it is the reflection of what Christ had Himself said. "Ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake." As with the Nazarene, so with His followers. It was only in their patience, when others stumbled, when faith was disappearing from the earth, when, under stress of abounding iniquity, the love of many was waxing cold, that these should win their souls. What Christ foresees is not the steady progress from victory to victory of the conquering Cross, but the age-long martyrdom, the passion of a thousand years, a community which, like its King, is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Let us beware lest we accept for ourselves or preach to others a mutilated gospel which is something other than that Gospel of the Kingdom which is the proper testimony of the Church. We shall fail to enter into God's purpose whether in the Body of Christ, or in the history of the world, or in the salvation of our own souls, if we do not keep close to the records. As I read my New Testament, though the work of Christ as an offering for sin was finished upon the cross once for all, though day by day in the Church and in its several members He is fulfilling a work of inward

consecration through the presence and power of His Spirit, He does not leave it to us to consummate, as best we may, His work of righteousness and of judgment. "Christ," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time." Try to realise what these words mean. The apostolic Christians could no more have understood, than could the Hebrew prophets, the proclamation of an acceptable year of the Lord apart from the day of vengeance of our God. Cleared of all imperfect views, like the pre-Christian ideas which we associate with the imprecatory psalms, the acceptable year was that consummation of the Divine sovereignty when righteousness should be for ever vindicated, when God should be seen reigning in visible presence among His people, and the kingdoms of this world should have become the kingdom of God's Messiah. What, then, was it that the disciples of Jesus exclaimed as they hailed their risen and ascended Master? "This is He," they declared, "by whom God will judge the quick and the dead." "This same Jesus shall so come" had been the words addressed to them as their eyes were fixed upon the cloud. It was inevitable, this hope of a returning Lord. It was the only deduction possible from the exaltation of the Son of Man of which His faithful band were witnesses. Otherwise the drama of the Messiah was arrested in mid

course. His office involved the restoration of all things. If there is to be no return, no visible and manifest reign, no binding of the devil, no triumph of the saints, the incarnation of the Son, the victory of the Cross, the session at God's right hand carry us nowhither. Once in the end of the ages Christ had appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Yes, but to put away was not only to reconcile the sinner but to triumph over principalities and powers. Read the second of Colossians, the fourth of Ephesians, the twelfth chapter of St. John, and many another passage, and you will see how fully this view is presented in the New Testament. Christ crucified, Christ exalted, these are but moments in the accomplishment of the final pomp. There is a pause in the action while from the four winds the elect are gathered and they whose life is now hid with Christ in God await the great unveiling. So the Apostolic Church proclaimed its full gospel, not merely Christ crucified and risen, but Christ dead, Christ living, Christ coming. It was a hope no less definite and concrete than the belief in the Son of God, actually and really born of the Virgin Mary. It was not the vague expectation of our English poet bidding the New Year's bells to ring in the Christ that is to be. It would not at all have been in line with their acknowledgment of the fact that Bethlehem's Babe was God's eternal Son to look forward, not to the Son of Mary

returning to claim the kingdom, but to the gradual establishment of better laws and purer ideals, the decay of war, the growth of industry and the arts of peace. Why is it that multitudes, who profess to believe that God did actually intervene in history when Jesus Christ was born, find it a hard thing to imagine that He will yet again interpose His visible presence into the midst of human affairs? May not our willingness to accept the one portion of this Gospel of the Kingdom be the measure of the hold that we have gained upon the other? May not our witness for the Coming Christ be the test of the sincerity with which we testify that Christ has come?

That this was the faith and hope of the Apostolic Church is unquestioned. This is the standard of Christianity alike evangelical and catholic. The urgency with which they proclaimed their message represented no feverish haste, no quixotic endeavour to convert a disobedient and gainsaying people, whether Jewish or Gentile, but a patient and triumphant effort to make ready in every nation a people prepared for the Lord and waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. "Save yourselves," they cried, "from this crooked generation." The doctrine of the remnant remained as true for the prophetic Church as for the race of Israel. Like Isaiah, like Christ Himself, they were charged with a testimony of which it would be true that the publication would make the hearts of

men gross and their ears heavy. Those who witnessed the martyrdoms of Stephen, of James, of Antipas had no illusions about the results of their preaching. And yet no perils were so severe, no difficulties so great, as to hinder their progress from Jerusalem to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Corinth, from Corinth to Rome. They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. "The world for Christ in this generation"—that was the task which their Master had set them. He was coming again, and in every nation was dispersed the great company of His elect, who were to be gathered into the mystic fellowship which was to greet the returning Lord. "Christ is coming"—that is the message which the Church needs to-day, and which, thank God, is even now being revived among us. "The Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to His temple." No man can say when the hour may strike; therefore the King's business requireth haste. Circumstances over which we have no control are fast antiquating the older theories about Church and State, which, valuable for their day and generation, yet obscured the fact that the sons of God are in every nation the faithful remnant of those who hold the testimony of Jesus. And at the same time the whole round world is mapped out for the invading armies of the living God as no previous age could have imagined or dreamed. Fling far your battle line. Give to the unseen Master, whose veiled

presence is with you in every Eucharist, in every enterprise of missionary effort, His own peculiar trophies from the snows of Canada, the plains of India, the rivers of China, the fair fields of the Rising Sun, the islands of the Southern Sea. Let the thick cloud of transgressions be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ. Then will God consummate His everlasting purpose, and we shall greet the manifested Kingdom.

THE SECOND COMING AND A PROGRESSIVE CHURCH

Before the University of Oxford in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin.



XXI

THE SECOND COMING AND A PROGRESSIVE CHURCH

AS we review in the light of history that great movement of religion which had its home in Oxford during the earlier half of the nineteenth century, we are reminded that it took its rise in the spirit of reaction. It is of course true that there is something reactionary in all religious and moral advance, for the appeal of the reformer is always made to a standard from which men have declined when he bids them to choose out the ancient paths and walk in them. But the Oxford Movement, unlike the Evangelical Revival, by which it was preceded, or the realisation of the Church's social mission, by which it has been followed, was rather an act of recovery, a renewal of youth, which enabled the Church of England to adjust itself to the demands of a new age, than itself a step forward or a response to larger opportunities. It recalled the Church from an imperfect and wholly inadequate realisation of its own

identity to a fuller and richer apprehension of the principles of its being. The rising Liberalism of England was, as we have been told a thousand times, the occasion of the Oxford tracts. Politically the writers were Tories. Themselves deeply religious, they were not religious reformers, but, like the modern apologists for Church schools, defenders of an institution, which seemed to them the pledge, nay, the inseparable condition, of the survival of true religion. "Hold fast the form," not "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward," was the watchword. Not the mission of Christianity to consecrate the new life of the nation, but the duty of the Church to maintain its clear-cut identity amid the growing antagonism of the world, was the uppermost thought. The new hopes, the new aspirations, the new aims of the popular mind and will, coupled as they were with an explicit warning to ecclesiastics to set their house in order, appeared as a stern demand for a severer discipline, a more uncompromising sincerity, a fuller perception of the true powers of the Divine Society, which secular States could neither give nor take away. "Is it not," wrote Newman to the clergy, "our very office to *oppose* the world? Can we allow ourselves to *court* it? to preach smooth things and prophesy deceits? to make the way of life easy to the rich and indolent, and to bribe the humbler classes by excitements and strong intoxicating doctrine? Surely it must not

be so ; and the question recurs, *On what* are we to rest our authority when the State deserts us ? ”

What has been the supreme value of the movement, with which this place and this pulpit will for ever be associated in the history of religion, for the progressive readjustments of the age, through which we are still passing, it is surely not difficult to indicate. Whatever may be the beauty, or even the inspiration, of the theory of a Christian nation considered as an ideal, the inexorable logic of facts has rendered the conception impossible as an instrument of practical advance. The notion, familiar and to no small extent actually realised in the sixteenth century, still lingers in the argument of those who set an exaggerated value on the civil establishment of religion. The last impressive mind to handle it with persuasive force was, I believe, that of Mandell Creighton. But from practice it has almost entirely disappeared. In all new countries the free Church in the free State, to use the popular phrase in spite of its inaccuracies, represents the only possible adjustment. The Latin countries are breaking the old connection. The only ground on which the maintenance of the ties that still unite them in England can be seriously defended is the welfare of the State. To the Church they are often a positive hindrance. For it is in proportion to its recognition of an independent identity, as a society, a brotherhood, a unity with a life and conscience of its own, that the Church is

enabled to become a practical force in the modern community. And it was at a critical moment of its history, when changes in the State had made acquiescence in the old theory an immediate menace to the faith, if not the very existence of the Church, that the Oxford Movement opened the eyes of English Churchmen to the true meaning of their inheritance, and set before them a splendid vision of a Divine Society which, if it linked itself with States and Governments, and expressed itself in national forms, yet came into existence without their aid and must continue in existence without their support.

But this revival of the Church spirit was not in itself a progressive movement. Like the band of Jewish patriots in the dark age of the Maccabees, who, when men saw not their tokens and there was no prophet, rallied the nation to the banner of the covenant, these loyal sons of the English Church, when hearts were failing, bade their brethren stir up the gift that was in them and betake themselves to their true Mother. Such a policy has always something about it of a forlorn hope. It springs out of the conviction that God will not fail His people. But it has no open vision, nor is it as in the day when Israel came out of Egypt pressing onward to possess the Promised Land. It rests on the past, it does not claim the future. God is Alpha as well as Omega, and origin no less than destiny has its appropriate place in the

sphere of true religion. But sure it is that of the two destiny is of infinitely more importance to mortal men. God's original creative act has no moral value apart from its expanding and progressive purpose. The belief that God made me will be an obstacle to my moral life apart from a conviction of what He means me to become. How dull the Old Testament would be if we had the Priests' Code without the Prophetic Narrative, the record of institutions, of origins, of genealogies, without the living inspiration of the Divine event that was slowly working towards its accomplishment in the romantic story of the ancient people! And if the Oxford Movement had been the last word in the modern history of the Church of England, that note of expectancy which is a certain mark of a progressive religion and of a developing Church would have ceased from among us. We should have had a pastoral but not a prophetic Church, a priestly mediation of blessings already won rather than a stewardship of mysteries preparing the way of a returning Lord. We thank God for the work of the Oxford Movement. We readily adhere to the conviction that a great and necessary revival of forgotten truths is associated with the honoured names of those who sacrificed preferment and popular esteem to preserve for the Church, which was dearer to them than life, the fullness of its apostolic inheritance. But at the same time we are bound to remember that, if they were

teachers, they were not prophets. Their work might easily have degenerated, with the lapse of the first enthusiasm, into an antiquarian and æsthetic formalism on the one hand, and a mediæval superstition on the other. It has been reserved for other and later influences, like the Christian Social Movement, of which Oxford House and the college missions are for us in Oxford the external symbol, and that new enthusiasm, more Christian still, which has already borne noble fruit in the conferences at Baslow and at Edinburgh, to find a place for it in that great and living inspiration which shall be the motive power and the unifying force of the Christian Society in the coming age.

The appeal of Dr. Pusey and of those who co-operated with him was, as we are all aware, to the primitive Church. Patient inquiry and sufficient learning will enable men to reconstruct the past, so far as their own imagination will carry them. But, where sympathy fails us, we shall be as blind to facts, which are plain enough to other people, as was Nelson to the unwelcome signal on the flagship at Copenhagen. If, for example, we compare those studies of the Christian ministry which were undertaken in the spirit of the Oxford Movement with the more recent work of a scholar like Dr. Lindsay, our conclusion, I think, will be, not that the apostolic age is less keenly appreciated by the latter than by the former, but that various sympathies working with the same material pro-

duce various pictures. One thing at any rate which we have learned to appreciate with much greater vividness than our predecessors is the activity of the prophets in the Christian communities before the wisdom of Alexandria imparted the complexion of a Greek philosophy to what was primarily a Hebrew revelation. Their significance is not always understood even by those who are fully alive to their importance in the primitive congregation. They are viewed either as a disorderly factor in the organisation of the Church or as a witness against hierarchical pretensions. But the point of highest importance is the connection which they establish between the Old Testament and the New. The hope, the expectation, the purpose of the Christian community, no less than of the ancient congregation, of which it was the legitimate successor, was fixed on the future. Priesthood and sacrifice under the Old Covenant, though the outlines of the system were in the main parallel to the religious rites which prevailed in Paganism, take their place in a progressive system. The difference lies here: The Hebrew ritual was no dumb, unintelligent service, but was subject from the first to the interpretation, the criticism, the control of the prophet. It looked not to the past but to the future. Abraham was a prophet, and behind the whole Hebrew polity was the destiny and the faith of the great ancestor. Moses was a prophet, and

the whole Levitical system, of which Aaron is the representative, was the mouthpiece of that revelation of His Name which, with the pattern of the tabernacle, is represented as disclosed to the great Lawgiver on the holy mount. It is a priestly system in a prophetic setting. Its face is always turned towards the future, to the consummation of the eternal purpose of God in the final vindication of righteousness. So, too, the foundations of the Christian community are laid amid a great outpouring of prophecy, which takes up and continues the work of Amos, of Isaiah, of Malachi, and reveals the hope of the Church as centred, not in the daily application and extension of a Messianic work already accomplished, but in the final Epiphany of Him who should appear the second time without sin unto salvation. The people of God are still a prophetic, a waiting, an expectant society, looking for the Lord from heaven and hasting unto the coming of the Day.

This hope was expressed in the very terms of the proclamation of glad tidings. The primitive preaching is misrepresented if it is summed up in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles makes it abundantly clear that forgiveness of sins in the name of the ascended Christ was connected immediately with the function of the risen Saviour as the man by whom God would judge the world. Nothing could be more explicit than St. Peter's statement that he was

charged by the risen Christ Himself to preach His glorified Master to the people as judge of quick and dead. The hope of Israel had always been that God would bring forth judgment unto victory. "By that man whom he ordained, even Jesus that was crucified," was the apostolic addition. So again in his address to the people in Solomon's porch this same apostle declares that the hope of Israel, concerning which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets since the beginning of the world, was neither the Cross nor the Resurrection, but the Restoration of all things, to which both these events were introductory. This present time, during which the heavens have received the glorified Christ and men hear the invitation to repentance and remission of sins, is but a moment in the development of the great drama of redemption, a necessary stage in the inauguration of those times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord when He shall send the Messiah appointed for His people, the crucified and regnant Jesus. We need to realise more fully than we have yet done the extraordinary prominence given by the primitive preaching to what is called the Second Coming, not as an immediate event, but as an essential element in the proclamation of the gospel. It is no addendum, no supplement to the glad tidings. It is itself the message. When St. Paul takes up the tale it is still the same. The future, not the past, is the focus of Christian

belief. To pagan as to Hebrew he declares how God commands all men everywhere to repent, "inasmuch as He hath appointed a day" of righteous judgment. How sadly we fail to understand the scope of St. Paul's theology—what, for instance, he means by justification—because we fail to see that he is standing in anticipation before the judgment seat, "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ." How many sermons we hear on the text, "Our citizenship is in heaven"; how few that recognise the close connection of the words that immediately follow, "from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ"!

Nor is this reading of the gospel only apostolic. It has the authority of Christ Himself. I do not propose this morning to canvass the theories which are to-day freely framed in consequence of the new interest in apocalyptic literature, which is one of the leading features of recent theological inquiry. We who are immersed in practical affairs have not the authority, and should therefore not presume, to pass judgment upon the results of studies which, alas! we have only been able imperfectly to follow. But this at least may be said, that those who from their earliest years have been taught to regard the expectation of Christ's coming as a practical part of the gospel can feel nothing but gratitude that what has too long been neglected by all save a few obscure and often fan-

tastic interpreters of Scripture should now by the labours of scientific investigators be brought out on to the highways of religious thought, and should at last begin to reassert that place in serious theology which it cannot renounce without grave loss to essential and primitive Christianity. No doubt the limitations under which the study is pursued will leave abundant room for prejudice and misunderstanding in the hypotheses constructed by ingenious minds. Time and criticism will duly separate the grain from the chaff. Meanwhile the discovery has been made that the apocalyptic element in the teaching and the mind of Jesus cannot be ignored. This in itself marks a significant era in the development of Christian theology.

One incident in the gospel narrative will be sufficient to reveal the attitude of Christ Himself. When John, in the seclusion of his solitary prison, heard of the works of Jesus, he sent two of his disciples to ask Him whether He were indeed the Coming One of Hebrew expectation. In the fullness of his prophetic insight, when his own heaven had not been darkened by the cloud of disappointment and defeat, he had recognised in Jesus of Nazareth the triumphant representative of the Divine Righteousness, holding in His hand the fan of judgment to winnow the harvest of the world. But was it He after all? If it were, why was the faithful herald, who in moments of

exaltation had believed himself sent to prepare the way of a victorious king, languishing without hope of release in a desolate dungeon? What was the Lord's answer? Let them go and tell John what they had actually seen and heard, those details of the ancient prophet's picture of the acceptable year which in the synagogue of Nazareth He had declared to be that day fulfilled in the ears of those who listened, the binding up of those whom sickness had broken; the opening of the prison, that those whom Satan had bound with the chain of blindness, leprosy—yea, death itself—might be set free; the proclamation of glad tidings to the poor. When he saw these things come to pass—such was the inference that the Baptist must himself draw—could he not await with confident hope “the day of vengeance of our God”? Could he not believe that the Judge stood before the doors? Could he not, like Peter, when in the name of Jesus the lame man at the Beautiful Gate was made to leap as an hart, proclaim that He, by whom the lame walked, was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead?

That the Christian community was but interpreting Christ Himself when it declared its belief in His visible reign as an integral part, nay, as the climax and crown of His redeeming work, is plain from the whole tenor of the gospel. The proportions of Redemption are different from those of the New Testament, which reflects the mind of Christ,

if we have "no gospel of the future," if we fail to lift up our heads as waiting to hail the day when He shall appear the second time unto salvation. Imagery, like that which was supplied by the language of Jewish apocalypse, there must of course be if issues as yet unrealised are to be expressed in terms which bring imagination to the aid of reason. But few conclusions are more suggestive of failure to appreciate the prophetic spirit than that which dismisses the primitive expectation of the Advent as based upon a mistake in which Christ Himself is supposed to have shared. It is a primitive Christian who warns his contemporaries of the timeless nature of those invisible things, which appear to the prophet's vision, when he reminds them of the Psalmist's words that in God's sight a thousand years are but as yesterday. Coleridge once said of Edward Irving that he seemed to see great ideas looming through the mist. In that phrase the philosopher has caught the characteristic of prophetic knowledge, useless for the calculation of times and seasons, unerring as the motive power of spiritual action. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . neither the Son," yet "the vision is for an appointed time." The atmosphere in which the prophet moves is not the gay beams of lightsome day in which an unimaginative criticism works. He that hath ears to hear listens to the voice which cries, "Yea, I come quickly,"

and responds with a joy that perceives a mystery, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

There can be no doubt that a new power of hope and patience, the influence of which it is impossible to measure, would stream upon the life and work of the Church if our eyes could be turned towards the future, if we could restore the expectant faith of the primitive community, if, like the early Christians, we could say our Creed with faces toward the dawn. Belief in the Second Coming has been disfigured with the extravagance of irresponsible teachers from Papias to Piazzì Smyth. But it was the hope of a coming Messiah that rescued from complacent self-sufficiency the belief of the ancient Hebrew that Israel was the chosen people of God. Nothing is more fatal than the assurance that Christ has come, if it be not accepted as the pledge that Christ is coming again. This faith concentrates effort, sweetens disappointment, kindles while it steadies enterprise. Surrounded now as always by a crooked and perverse generation, the lives of Christians easily sink into a comfortable security or a listless inactivity, if their view of the future be only this, that somehow and at some time in virtue of the promise and power committed to the Church the world which now seems indifferent will in the evolution of the centuries be gradually reduced to that heavenly state when the leopard shall lie down with the lamb, and the earth shall be full of

the knowledge of the Lord. But another spirit is stirring in the consciences of Christian men to-day. Young lives all over the world are responding to that stirring cry, "The world for Christ in this generation," which has been the inspiration of the Christian Student movement, and with its urgent call for zeal, for devotion, for sacrifice, repeats the enthusiasm of those apostolic days when men went forth to be witnesses to their returning Master in the uttermost parts of the earth. And now once again God is reviving His work in the midst of the days. Once again He is sending forth His witnesses to gather His elect from the four winds, that Indian and African, men of China and Corea, dwellers in the sunset and inhabitants of the isles, may be ready to acclaim His Christ when He comes on the wings of the morning. And how shall we interpret that social movement which holds the energies of thousands of ardent Christians to-day? Nothing is easier than to slip down to the level of a secular gospel, and for the kingdom of Christ to substitute the federation of the world. But for us who "believe that Thou shalt come," this can never be. For us, O Lord, it is the gathering of the wood and the iron, the silver and the gold, the pine, the fir-tree, and the box, to beautify the place of Thy sanctuary, and to make the place of Thy feet glorious. And with our gaze fixed, not on the past but on the future, surely a new spirit of

fraternity and mutual longing comes over those who have lived apart in ecclesiastical separations, where but yesterday it seemed as though a great gulf were fixed. Is it too much to hope that those remarkable gatherings, in which sons of the Oxford Movement and children of the Puritans have with no sacrifice of cherished conviction united in fervent praise and prayer, are harbingers of a new devotion to a coming Saviour? When once men realise that it is the future that matters, they may trust God to show them how to enter in and possess the land without forfeiture of the inheritance of the past.

Christ is coming. It is the inspiration of worship. The Eucharist is a majestic act of praise, view it how we will. There is a pathos and a power in its celebration if it be no more, as some have supposed, than a commemoration of the Cross of Christ. To join with millions of Christian men of all times and countries in the annunciation of the Lord's Death is to achieve an act of fellowship that is sublime. And if with the apostle we can penetrate the mystery and learn by an experience more priceless than rubies that the broken Bread is a communion of the Body, the consecrated Cup a communion of the Blood of that living One who became dead and is alive for evermore, we shall eat, worship, and be satisfied. But if, as we gather round the Board of Him who is alike the unseen Master of the feast and the

spiritual meat of those whom He honours as His guests, we can lift up our eyes unto the hills, we shall rejoice like men who catch the first streaks of the coming dawn, and our worship will be a veritable Hymnus Eucharisticus of greeting to a returning Lord.

And what a glory does this great belief shed upon the quiet resting-places of them that sleep in Jesus! In the Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey there is a grave which all Englishmen honour, and above it is inscribed an epitaph more primitive, more Catholic and Apostolic, more deeply Christian than a thousand Requiescats, which records the solemn fact that here lies the body of Edmund Spenser, "expecting the second comminge of our Saviour Christ Jesus."



G—EPILOGUE

THE LAST WORD

At the Passion Music in Manchester Cathedral, Holy Week, 1911.

“The meek-spirited shall possess the earth.’

PSALM xxxvii. 11 (P.B.V.)

XXII

THE LAST WORD

THE Son of Man quoted these words in the Sermon on the Mount and justified them on the cross.

That the inheritance of the earth is to the meek sounds like an absurd paradox to the efficient jannock man, to whom "the multitude of peace" is an unmeaning phrase and with whom push is power. But it is true. For it is in weakness that strength stands complete, and out of the mouths of babes that praise is made perfect.

There are many loud voices in the world—hard, insistent, often discordant—but the Passion Music is its undertone, its still small voice, its conscience. Its note is universal. It has neither vogue, nor fashion, nor day. It is the alternative to every measure. We cannot criticise it when, as this evening, it is rendered in our hearing. We listen, and bow the head.

I have said that the music of the Passion is the alternative of every measure. Travellers

in other lands, where it is the custom to erect wayside Calvaries, know something of the strange fascination with which the rudest representation of the crucifix arrests the attention, now amid the vineyards' rows, now at the harbour mouth, now in a forest glade, now at some corner of the busy street, now prominent against the sky as on the Kofel of Ober Ammergau. Or who that has any imagination is not struck as by the sense of some strange dominance when amid the lustre of busy London, with its roaring traffic and its multitudinous affairs, he suddenly looks up through some opening among the houses and sees towering over the roofs of the city the golden cross upon St. Paul's?

For in our hearts we all know, even the most hasty, that the race is not to the swift; that the victors are the silent who neither strive nor cry; and that the Father of the universe is strong because He is patient. And the Passion is the patience of God, who declares His almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy; who puts down the mighty from their seat and exalts the humble and meek.

There is something in the face of the Crucified as of one who can afford to wait. When it confronts you in the midway of this mortal life, you know that you do not look upon it for the last time. Sometime, somewhere it will meet you again. Go your way to your farm,

to your merchandise, to the manifold occupations of a busy life, but in your memory you carry the image of Jesus Crucified, and the memory will yet again become a present experience. It will at least judge you if it does not save. The last word will be not yours but His! The wondrous cross is the picture which hangs for ever in the justice-room of your conscience, and to a higher tribunal there is no appeal.

His very nakedness is the certificate of His sovereignty. "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots." This is the only King that can afford to appear before His subjects unclothed. He has no weakness to hide, no frailty to cover, no shame to conceal. The uneasy pageant of the world passes beneath the cross, never continuing in one stay, and He is always there silent, waiting, reigning. He is always there.

God never advertises. Why should He? He is no shopkeeper, fearful of bankruptcy, tremulous lest the fickle crowd should be attracted to the wares of other applicants for popular favour. What if He is misrepresented, criticised, rejected? The future is His, and therefore He whose heart is as the heart of a little child reveals Himself to babes. To the strong, the proud, the truculent God never says a word. Nor will He ever descend from His cross or abate one jot of the order of the universe so

that men may believe Him. It is the steady persistence with which He wears the crown of thorns that tells.

For God waits with His wounded hands for the only victory for which Love cares. Cæsar wants your substance, your service; Christ wants you. Sooner or later the weary, wandering souls of men return to that great sight—humbled, contrite, penitent—to find that it is a personal revelation of their own profoundest need. They have learned the meaning of that strange fascination which always drew them back to the Crucified, even when pride most resented that Face pale with pain. The pursuit of fame, the hope of wealth, the desire for knowledge, the stimulus of social ambition, the powers and passions of a vigorous youth have found their transient satisfactions and have left them hungry still. Then they learned, how often through a hard and bitter experience, that the supreme need of the heart was pardon, through which alone comes peace and power. And at length for them the day of Jesus Christ had dawned, and in that visage, so marred more than any man, that form more than the sons of men, they beheld the Love that through the centuries has been seeking its lost sheep through pain, and that reigns because it redeems. So day by day men return to the kind Shepherd who has given His life because He is meek and lowly in heart.

Blest with His forgiveness and quickened by His Spirit, they too enter upon their victorious heritage by learning of His patience and go on their way rejoicing, being refreshed with the multitude of peace. Say, has He yet found you?

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